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## Funding justice must be Budget priority

The rule of law and human rights of all people are core tenets of our modern democracy and having equal access to justice is a vital part of protecting those rights. Therefore, access to justice must be properly resourced.

“All Australians have the right to seek justice, but this right doesn’t count for much if it cannot be exercised. Ensuring this right for every person underpins each of the recommendations contained in the Law Council’s Pre-Budget Submission,” Law Council of Australia President, Mr Tass Liveris explained.

The [Law Council’s Pre-Budget Submission](#) calls for a full review of the resourcing needs of the judicial system.

“We want the Australian Government to commit to this review and to providing resources if areas that require additional support are identified,” Mr Liveris said.

“In addition, we would like to see increased allocations in the 2022-23 Budget for our courts, commissions and tribunals to enable them to fill vacancies, appoint additional judges and reduce backlogs.

“Legal problems commonly occur in society, however an unacceptable proportion of our population are disadvantaged and vulnerable in their interactions with our legal system.

“Increasing baseline ongoing funding for Legal Aid Commissions, Community Legal Centres, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services by at least \$400 million is critical to addressing current service gaps.

“Australians living outside capital cities are one group in particular who can face difficulties in accessing legal services. The Australian Government should allocate adequate, long-term funding for legal assistance services in regional, rural and remote communities and investigate funding for the development of incentive programs that encourage solicitors to take up employment in these communities.”

The Law Council’s submission also seeks to ensure an improved family law system through implementation of the remaining Australian Law Reform Commission’s recommendations in its *Inquiry into the Family Law System*, including sustained funding of court-based initiatives that aim to facilitate early dispute resolution, such as the Lighthouse Project, the Priority Property Pools under \$500,000 program, and the Family Dispute Resolution program.

“While still out for consultation, we hope to see funds set aside in this year’s Budget for implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children,” Mr Liveris said.