# Collaborative Planning Committee

## 20 May 2020

### Attendance

**Present**: Anna Faithfull (Department of Justice and Community Safety), Stuart Webb (Law Institute of Victoria), Lynne Haultain (Victoria Law Foundation), Louise Glanville (Victoria Legal Aid), Nerita Waight (Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service), Simon Moglia (Vic Bar), Megan Ross (Djirra), Federation of Community Legal Centres representative.

**Observers**: Peter Noble (VLA), Rachael Joachim-Rovira (DJCS)

**Secretariat**: Amy Schwebel (VLA)

**Agenda item 6**: Hugh McDonald (VLF), Suzie Forell (Health Justice Australia), Jacqueline Storey (VLA), Fran Demetriou (Djirra).

## Meeting summary

The Committee met online due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Committee opened with an Acknowledgement of Country and acknowledged the various lands on which Committee members were joining the meeting from. Louise Glanville, Chair of the Collaborative Planning Committee welcomed new representatives from the Federation of Community Legal Centres and Victorian Bar to the Committee.

The Committee discussed the draft scope of the Legal Need and Regional Service Statement, the development of which was agreed at the January 2020 meeting. A focus on regional service delivery reflects the common interest of Committee members in understanding and expanding access to justice across Victoria. The Committee’s discussion was supported by a paper to the Committee outlining the proposed structure and content of the Statement:

1. Overview of current service provision across the mixed model of legal assistance in regional Victoria and outer-metropolitan Melbourne, including where Melbourne-based services assist in access to assistance in regional locations;
2. Analysis of unmet demand in outer-metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria
3. Identification of models of service provision that have been successfully evaluated;
4. Persistent challenges in delivering services in regional Victoria;
5. Working principles for guiding Committee member service design and planning responses in regional Victoria; and
6. The leadership role of the Committee going forward with respect to regional service provision, application of the principles and impact on unmet demand, and (over time) outcomes for clients.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would support development of sections 1 to 4, and this data and analysis would support Committee discussions and development of concrete commitments under sections 5 and 6. It was agreed there was benefit in completing this work in 2020 to inform the 2021-22 State budget process.

The Committee welcomed the COVID-19 legal assistance funding announcement and noted the announcement of Victoria signing onto the National Legal Assistance Partnership. The Committee reflected on likely ongoing demand pressures from COVID-19 legal assistance due to adjourned matters and an increase in the number of people eligible for legal assistance due to economic circumstances.

The Committee received an update on Disaster Legal Help Victoria and noted the challenges in providing services remotely following the temporary closure of recovery centres due to COVID-19 restrictions. The transition to remote service provision and digital service delivery was discussed more broadly including the need to understand where this transition has created a gap in access to inform what service changes should remain after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, where there has been an improvement, and where there may be benefit of further reform.

The Committee engaged in a focused discussion on collecting and analysing data to demonstrate outcomes. This discussion was supported by reflections from Health Justice Australia, the Victoria Law Foundation, Djirra, VALS and the Federation on the development of outcomes frameworks for their organisations (or sectors), the necessary enablers of transitioning to outcomes reporting including data collection, and the challenges experienced to date. The links between outcomes reporting and the National Legal Assistance Partnership were noted. It was observed that legal assistance sector organisations are wanting to do more and improved data work including a transition to outcomes but encounter system, capacity and resource limitations. The Committee reflected that outcomes reporting will better position Victoria to more powerfully tell the story of the difference we make to vulnerable Victorians. The Committee agreed to establishing a working group on outcomes to further consider the role of the Committee with respect to this work.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 19 August 2020.