

# Quick guide to the Report

---

Australian CLCs engage in three different broad types of activity:

- individual legal assistance or direct service work
- community legal education
- policy and law reform work or advocacy work

Despite insufficient funding to address the large amount of individual legal need, CLCs should still engage in more than individual service work, and in particular policy and law reform work, because:

- doing so forms a critical part of the unique history and nature of Australian CLCs and must continue if CLCs are to remain relevant as a distinct institutional form for the provision of legal services to the disadvantaged;
- it is simply more effective to engage in a mix of activities if we want to maximise the benefits we provide to our clients; and
- arguably, strong moral commitments should impel CLCs to engage in this broader work.

Several interesting developments in the US could perhaps be adapted for use by CLCs, including:

- leveraging individual casework, such as through focused case representation, representing organisations and groups, and better information and record keeping;
- strategic campaign planning; and
- law and organising.

CLCs should engage in policy and law reform work despite funding constraints, but more funding and a broader funding mix would assist. Progressive organisations should also develop more expertise in taxation and government spending to help expand the pool of government funding available for progressive social services and social justice initiatives.

An evaluation component must be built into any planned advocacy work to ensure any gains are implemented. CLCs will probably require support from funders and other support organisations to incorporate better monitoring and evaluation practices into their work.

From: Nicole Rich, Reclaiming Community Legal Centres: Maximising our potential so we can help our clients realise theirs, Victoria Law Foundation Community Legal Centre Fellowship 2007-8 Final Report, April 2009

