



MEDIA RELEASE

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CANCELLED: THE INNOVATIVE GRANTS PROGRAM THAT IMPROVES ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN NSW

It is with great regret that the Board of the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW has announced that its long-running and innovative Grants Program has been cancelled, due to a lack of core funding.

Over the past 20 years the Grants Program has awarded more than \$4.6 million to projects that have significantly improved access to justice for socially and economically disadvantaged people in New South Wales. It has affected change for people such as women experiencing domestic violence, young people, people with mental health problems, people with a disability and Indigenous Australians.

“The cancellation of the Grants Program is a huge loss not only for the justice sector but also for the people of New South Wales,” says Paul Stein AM QC, Chair of the Foundation.

“This long-running program has supported numerous innovative projects which have had a direct impact on the ability of everyday people to exercise their legal rights. It has also yielded many useful insights into what works – and what doesn’t work – in delivering legal assistance to people across New South Wales, including people living in remote areas and newly-arrived migrants. The program will be sorely missed by the community.”

As a statutory body, the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW is mandated by the NSW government to improve access to justice through supporting these projects, and through its independent, rigorous research. The Grants Program was a key part of fulfilling this mandate.

The Foundation is funded through the Public Purpose Fund, which is under the control of the NSW Attorney General and government legislation. However, since 2012 the Foundation’s PPF allocation has been in serious decline. The Foundation has drawn on its reserves but these have now been largely exhausted, leaving it little choice but to cancel the program.

“This is a tragedy,” says Chair Paul Stein. “The Grants Program has been a way to support community-driven initiatives to overcome barriers to justice, and this is now lost. Without proper funding, the very existence of the Law and Justice Foundation and its people-focused research to improve access to justice will be threatened, and its enormously valuable contribution to the community of NSW may also be lost.”

The Foundation thanks all organisations that have participated in the Grants Program and extends its gratitude to those individuals who have reviewed grant applications, contributing to the quality and integrity of the program.

All existing grants will continue unaffected.

This announcement follows the announcement in March 2018 that the Justice Awards were being cancelled.

Media enquiries

Catherine Carpenter mob 0415 269 933
ccarpenter@lawfoundation.net.au

Follow us on Twitter @NSWLawFound

Law and Justice Foundation of NSW

Level 13, 222 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

PO Box A109
Sydney South NSW 1235
AUSTRALIA

P: +61 2 8227 3200
E: lf@lawfoundation.net.au
T: @NSWLawFound
W: www.lawfoundation.net.au
ABN: 54 227 668 981