



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL  
THE HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**RUDD GOVERNMENT BOOSTS LEGAL SERVICES FOR REGIONAL, RURAL AND  
REMOTE COMMUNITIES**

Attorney-General Robert McClelland today announced \$5.8 million in additional funding to improve access to justice for communities in regional, rural and remote Australia.

“The Rudd Government understands that people living in regional, rural and remote Australia are among the most disadvantaged in the community when it comes to getting assistance with their legal problems. That is why, in implementing the Regional Innovations Program for Legal Services, we have taken the opportunity to expand its scope to allow funding for a broader range of services,” Mr McClelland said.

“Experience shows that if legal problems are not resolved early, they can compound and result in a range of adverse consequences, including the loss of health, job, home and relationships, which can lead to social exclusion.”

The funding will be provided through legal aid commissions in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania who sought additional funds for a range of capacity-building initiatives to enhance legal aid services for disadvantaged Australians in regional, rural and remote areas, especially those facing a family breakdown.

“Helping country firms to employ lawyers and build their capacity to provide local legal services will ensure people can get early help with their legal problems and prevent these problems from escalating,” Mr McClelland said.

Funding is also being made available through the National Association of Community Legal Centres to support country law graduates to complete their practical legal training in regional Australia.

“This will help encourage those graduates to consider long-term employment opportunities in regional Australia and increase the number of law graduates who choose to remain in their local communities to work as legal practitioners,” Mr McClelland said.

These support measures further demonstrate the Rudd Government’s commitment to improve access to justice for vulnerable members of our community. They come on top of a \$10 million one-off injection for the Commonwealth Community Legal Services Program – the largest ever injection in the program’s history; and a \$7 million one-off injection for legal aid.

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