

MEDIA RELEASE

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Auckland Council needs CABs for Community Resilience

Citizens' advice bureaux (CABs) are a bedrock part of community resilience and must be retained by the Auckland Council according to Community Law Centres o Aotearoa (CLCA).

“It is alarming to see the Council move to close the CABs down at the very time when Aucklanders need support to navigate their way through increasingly complex situations,” says CLCA CEO Sue Moroney. “Having CABs to help people find the information and support they need is a vital part of community resilience.”

“CAB’s regularly refer those who are eligible for community legal services to their local community law centre if they require legal support for their situations and we can vouch for the value of the service they provide.”

“Auckland councillors need to know that Community Law Centres cannot absorb the significant gap that would be left if CABs were to close and that will therefore leave thousands of people without that information and guidance to get their issues addressed,” says Sue.

Last year the CAB helped over 160,000 Aucklanders navigate issues and understand what their options were.

“Any sensible cost-benefit analysis would establish that this small amount of funding is money well-spent by Auckland Council given the social cost that will be borne by the community if CABs close and the flow-on effects of that,” says Sue.

Unlike CABs, Community Law Centres provide free legal help for those who cannot afford a lawyer. Therefore, many people accessing CAB services will not be eligible for community legal services.

“Our message is clear – if Auckland councillors value community resilience, they need to stop the proposed funding cuts to CABs” says Sue.

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Background

Twenty-four Community Law Centres work out of over 140 locations across New Zealand to provide free legal help and advice to those who are unable to pay for a private lawyer or who do not have access to legal aid. This advice covers all aspects of New Zealand’s legal system, including family law, employment issues, housing problems, consumer advice and criminal law. As well as around 170 staff, Community Law’s services are boosted by over 1,200 volunteer lawyers who run clinics and deliver free advice and assistance.