



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 14 August 2019

CHATBOT TO MAKE SOLVING LEGAL ISSUES SIMPLE

The NSW Government will invest \$250,000 into designing and building a chatbot that will help vulnerable people solve common legal problems with speed and ease, Attorney General Mark Speakman announced today.

Marrickville Legal Centre will pioneer the technology after becoming the first recipient of a grant from the government's new Access to Justice Innovation Fund.

"Utilising artificial intelligence, the chatbot will answer commonly asked legal questions online and in real time," Mr Speakman said.

"It will triage enquiries so straightforward legal issues such as traffic fines or rental bond queries are addressed promptly, leaving more time for Community Legal Centre staff to personally assist clients with more complex problems."

The program will initially be designed for Marrickville Legal Centre, and then made available to Community Legal Centres (CLCs) across the state.

"This innovation could revolutionise service delivery in CLCs by reducing the bottleneck of simple queries," Mr Speakman said.

"On top of the NSW Government's [record investment](#) in CLCs, this program will help more disadvantaged people in NSW access free legal services than ever before."

Managing Principal Solicitor of the Marrickville Legal Centre Vasili Maroulis said the centre's clients would be the biggest winners from the development of LegalBot.

"LegalBot will reduce wait times for the hundreds of people who contact the Marrickville Legal Centre each week in need of assistance," Mr Maroulis said.

"It won't replace our face-to-face services – in fact it will enable our staff to provide greater support to the people who need it most."

The NSW Government has pledged \$1 million over four years to the Access to Justice Innovation Fund, offering grants of up to \$250,000 to encourage organisations to develop ideas aimed at improving the way legal problems are solved.

The first round attracted 29 applicants, with Marrickville Legal Centre selected following a robust evaluation by a panel which included representatives from Legal Aid NSW and the Department of Communities and Justice.