



**Australian Government**  
**Attorney-General's Department**

MC16-075114

21 July 2016

Ms Katie Fraser  
Ms Cate Edwards  
Acting Joint Executive Officers  
Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc  
Level 3 225 Bourke St  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms Fraser and Ms Edwards

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 June 2016 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, about funding for community legal centres. Your letter was referred to the Attorney-General, Senator the Hon George Brandis QC, as the issues you have raised fall within his portfolio responsibilities. I am responding on behalf of the Attorney-General.

I appreciate that you are concerned about funding to the services you represent. The Australian Government is committed to doing what it can to increase funding levels for legal assistance in the tight fiscal environment, particularly for those vulnerable clients impacted by domestic violence. I have outlined some recent funding measures below.

The Australian Government will provide a total of around \$1.6 billion from 2015-2020 to legal aid commissions, community legal centres and Indigenous legal assistance providers to deliver vital front-line services to vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians. This includes \$1.3 billion over the five year life of the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services which delivers funding for legal aid and community legal centres. Approximately \$350 million will also be provided to Indigenous legal assistance providers through direct agreements.

On 12 May 2016, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Women and the Minister for Social Services announced \$30 million in funding for legal assistance services to provide more help to those affected by family violence. The \$30 million funding is part of the \$100 million announced in the 2016 budget to implement the Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. The Attorney-General is leading consultation with states, territories and peak legal assistance bodies about how this funding could be used to have the greatest impact.

In addition, the Government's Women's Safety Package, announced in September 2015, delivers \$100 million to address the issue of family violence, including \$15 million over three years for legal assistance services. The purpose of the legal assistance funding is to trial innovative service models delivering wrap-around legal and related support to women experiencing domestic violence. This will establish an evidence base for future use of this service model in the legal assistance sector.

Thank you again for writing to the Prime Minister on these important issues.

Yours sincerely