



MEDIA RELEASE

4 March 2015

Community Legal Centres welcome ALP response to national family violence crisis

Community Legal Centres have welcomed today's announcements by the Leader of the Opposition in response to the national crisis in family violence. The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) endorsed the clear recognition that exceptional family violence demand is having a major impact on legal services across Australia.

Michael Smith, Chair of the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) stated, "It is a sad reality that family violence is having a huge and devastating impact in the community. This year women have been killed each week and there are thousands of families facing threatening situations every day."

"The funding announcement for Community Legal Centres across the country is essential as many services are not able to meet urgent demand. Currently, too many women and children do not receive the legal help they need and location inequities make this worse. This is unacceptable."

"The good news is that the community is becoming much more aware of the depth and devastating impact of family violence. But as more women and children seek help, services need the capacity to respond. This is indeed a national crisis."

NACLC particularly welcomes the commitment to additional funding for services assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are much more likely to be hospitalised and more likely to seek support for homelessness services to escape family violence. The Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) play a vital role in assisting these women and we strongly support calls for the reinstatement of their funding," concluded Mr Smith.

NACLC emphasised the urgency of the crisis. "While we welcome Labor's announcements, women and children should not have to wait. Legal assistance services are facing major funding cuts in July that will reduce the services to these families at a time that they should be increased. We call on the Commonwealth Government to act now to restore funding and implement these proposals.

The Call for a National Crisis Summit was also endorsed. "Clearly gender inequality and community attitudes are a root cause of these issues. The whole community, women and men, need to work together to ensure change and prevent family violence."

Ends

For further information or to arrange an interview contact: NACLC Chair Michael Smith
0421 437 883.

NACLC acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands across Australia and particularly the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, traditional owners of the land on which the NACLC office is situated. We pay deep respect to Elders past and present.