



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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# Community Legal Centres recognise World AIDS Day

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) and HIV/AIDS Legal Centre today acknowledge World AIDS Day, held on 1 December each year to raise awareness globally about HIV and AIDS.

“World Aids Day provides an opportunity to address the myths that still surround HIV/AIDS, and end discrimination against people with HIV. On a daily basis Community Legal Centres (CLCs), both generalist and specialist, see the devastating impact stigma and discrimination can have on vulnerable members of our society” said Rosslyn Monro, Chair of NACLC.

One of those specialist CLCs that directly assist people with HIV/AIDS is the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre (HALC) based in Sydney. In 2014/15, HALC assisted over 800 clients and provided approximately 17000 hours of legal support to people who would otherwise not have been able to access legal help.

“CLCs help the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our society. What we know is that HIV disproportionately affects already vulnerable populations such as gay men, migrants, sex workers, women and injecting drug users. This vulnerability, and the negative effects of stigma and discrimination, are amplified by the fact that a third of people with HIV live below the poverty line and half have difficulty meeting basic expenses like food, rent and medication. This means that the frontline legal help HALC provides is absolutely vital” said Indraveer Chatterjee, Principal Solicitor at HALC.

“Today represents an opportunity to celebrate all that has been achieved, and all the clients we have assisted, but also look to the future. CLCs, including HALC face a significant funding cut from 2017 onwards. Without adequate funding we can’t continue to give free legal assistance to the thousands of people who need our help each year” concluded Ms Monro.

For further information or to arrange an interview contact:

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*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.*