



MEDIA RELEASE

10 December 2015

NACLC hopeful of Government action on human rights

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) today marks Human Rights Day, celebrated each year on 10 December commemorating the day on which the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“It has been a big year in terms of human rights in Australia- numerous key inquiries and reviews highlighted human rights concerns and hundreds of countries made recommendations to Australia highlighting areas for improvement as part of our recent Universal Periodic Review,” said Amanda Alford, Director Policy and Advocacy at the NACLC.

The “Universal Periodic Review” is also referred to as the human rights scorecard and is a 4-yearly review of the human rights record of each UN Member State. Australia’s second review occurred in November 2015 and over 100 countries made recommendations to Australia for improvement.

“The review made it clear that Australia has significant room to improve in a number of areas, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples rights, the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers, the rights of people with disability, and access to justice. The recommendations provide a basis for Australia to look at its record in these areas and commit to making changes moving forward” said Ms Alford.

The Australian Government also made a number of voluntary commitments as part of the appearance. “We welcome the commitments made by the Government, in particular to develop a public and accessible process for monitoring Australia’s progress in implementing the recommendations, and a standing mechanism to strengthen Australia’s engagement with UN human rights reporting” said Ms Alford.

The Australian Government is required to respond to the recommendations made as part of the Universal Periodic Review by March 2016, indicating whether or not each of the recommendations are accepted. “We are hopeful that there will be a clear indication from the Government as part of the response about how the Government anticipates implementing the recommendations in a practical sense” added Ms Alford.

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.

“Combined with Australia’s recently announced candidacy for the Human Rights Council, we are hopeful that these mechanisms will provide the necessary impetus for improving Australia’s domestic human rights record. On this day next year we hope to have seen significant improvement in key areas of human rights in Australia and look forward to working constructively with the Government over the next year to achieve this” concluded Ms Alford.

For further information or to arrange an interview contact NACLC Director Policy and Advocacy Amanda Alford 0421 028 645.