

MEDIA RELEASE

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NACLC ACKNOWLEDGES LIMITED ADDITIONAL FAMILY VIOLENCE FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) today acknowledged the announcement by the Commonwealth Government of a \$5 million one-year extension of the pilot funding provided to Community Legal Centres (CLCs) and Legal Aid Commissions under the Women's Safety Package for specialist family violence units and Health Justice Partnerships.

The announcement at the COAG National Family Violence Summit came as the Government unveiled the allocation of an additional \$30 million over three years for legal assistance services under the Third Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. The announcement also included \$18 million additional funding for Legal Aid Commissions as well as additional funding for Family Relationship Centres.

"Any additional funding for CLCs providing vital services to people experiencing family violence is welcome. We welcome the Government's acknowledgement of the work of CLCs in providing vital services for people experiencing family violence" said Dan Stubbs, NACLC National Spokesperson.

"However, it is important to recognise that the announcement is very limited. It is for \$5 million to be shared by only 11 of over 185 CLCs across Australia for one year. It does not address the broader funding cliff facing CLCs from 1 July next year" he said.

"We are extremely concerned about the impact the funding cliff, a 30% reduction in Commonwealth funding for CLCs nationally, will have on people experiencing family violence. Given the broader reduction will take effect during the same period as these pilots, and will force centres to close or reduce services, there is a real risk that the cut will negate the positive impact of this additional funding" he added.

"We are also disappointed that no funding was allocated to Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services as a vital part of the legal assistance sector. However, we are hopeful of an announcement of additional funding for those services as part of the additional \$25 million identified for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and initiatives under the Third Action Plan" he said.

"Overall, while we had hoped for more funding for CLCs, we are committed to working with the Government to ensure people experiencing family violence get the legal help they need, as well as working to reverse the looming funding cliff facing CLCs and the legal assistance sector" concluded Mr Stubbs.

To arrange an interview or for more information contact:

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Announcement Details

- Over \$18 million to Legal Aid Commissions for integrated duty lawyer and social support services in family law courts
- \$5 million to twelve CLCs and Legal Aid Commissions that received funding under the Women's Safety Package to establish specialist domestic violence units and Health Justice Partnerships to extend those pilots for an additional year
- \$6.2 million for Family Relationship Centres to pilot family dispute resolution for vulnerable families, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse families
- \$300,000 for data analysis across the legal assistance sector to enhance understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence.