

## Media Release

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### Community lawyers at frontline of family violence call for Government support

Today, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, is an opportunity to acknowledge the vital work that Community Legal Centres do to help women and children experiencing family violence.

“Community Legal Centres across Australia provide free legal help to hundreds of thousands of women and girls experiencing family violence” said Dan Stubbs, National Spokesperson of the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC).

“We help with immediate issues such as safety planning and protection orders as well as other issues related to the violence such as family law, credit and debt, problems with Centrelink, tenancy disputes, and employment issues” he said.

“Through our Health Justice Partnerships we provide free legal help to women who attend medical appointments. So often this is the only chance for a woman experiencing family violence to leave the house alone, and so getting them immediate assistance in that window is crucial” he added.

Women’s Legal Services are specialist Community Legal Centres that provide assistance to women experiencing legal problems arising from family violence and relationship breakdown.

“On days like today it is important to reflect the key role Women’s Legal Services play in helping victim survivors of family violence” said Agata Wierzbowski, National Law Reform Coordinator for Women’s Legal Services Australia (WLSA).

“Every day we help women access safety, help with immediate and long-term legal issues arising out of family violence, and in some cases save women’s lives” added Ms Wierzbowski.

“However, we can’t begin to address family violence without addressing the problems in our family law system. That’s why WLSA, together with Rosie Batty, have developed a 5-Step Plan to [Safety First in Family Law](#)” she said.

“One part of that Plan is to ensure adequate funding for family violence services, including Community Legal Centres” Ms Wierzbowski added.

“It is timely that this year’s theme for today is *‘Orange the world: raise money to end violence against women and girls’* given that CLCs across Australia will face a 30% funding cliff from 1 July next year” said Mr Stubbs.

“We are set to lose almost \$35 million over the next few years nationally. This will mean that women and children experiencing family violence won’t get the legal help they need”.

“Starting today, the next 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence are a pertinent reminder to the Federal Government of the urgency of this issue and the importance of working with the sector to reverse the funding cliff and ensure women across Australia get this vital legal help” concluded Mr Stubbs.

**To arrange an interview or for more information contact:**

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For more information about the Orange the World Campaign see: [UNiTE to End Violence](#)