

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Cuts loom for crucial legal support for women this International Women's Day

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) today renewed calls on the Australian Government to demonstrate its commitment to addressing family violence by reversing looming funding cuts to Community Legal Centres that will take effect from July 1 this year.

“Community Legal Centres (CLCs) play a vital role in providing legal help to people experiencing family violence. Family violence is one of the top areas of law in which CLCs provide support to hundreds of thousands of people every year”, said NACLC Chairperson Sara Kane.

“The 30 per cent federal funding cut facing CLCs in the coming months will have a dramatically negative impact on the ability of survivors to access quality legal services”, she added.

“It is alarming to think of the family violence victims that will be turned away at CLCs who no longer have the capacity to help them. Some outreach programs will be forced to close. I cannot underestimate the seriousness of the situation facing CLCs”, Ms Kane said.

“Just last week we saw comments by the CEO of the Family Court of Australia acknowledging the impact of the cuts on the work of the Family Court. These cuts will be felt across the legal sector”, she said.

“We welcome the Government’s injection of funding last year for legal assistance of victims of family violence, but it does not come close to offsetting the funding cuts we will see from July 1 this year”, said Ms Kane.

“International Women’s Day is a pivotal time for all levels of government to demonstrate their commitment to ending family violence. This includes a commitment to reverse the funding cuts to CLCs and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services to allow them to continue the important work of providing essential legal services to victims of family violence”, Ms Kane concluded.

#### NACLC calls on the Federal Government to:

- Reverse the national funding cuts to CLCs under the National Partnership Agreement (amounting to \$34.83 million between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2020)
- Immediately inject \$120 million per year into the legal assistance sector, consistent with the recommendation made by the Productivity Commission, including at a minimum \$14.4 million per year to CLCs
- Commit to developing a process for determining sustainable long-term funding contributions to the legal assistance sector; and
- Provide additional funding for other legal assistance services, including Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and Legal Aid Commissions.

#### To arrange an interview or for more information please contact:

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