

MEDIA RELEASE

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Tasmanian CLCs saved for another year as State Government covers federal funding shortfall

In welcome news, the Tasmanian state government has committed to covering the federal funding shortfall of community legal centres (CLCs) over 2017/18.

The Tasmanian government's investment in the legal assistance sector will fully offset 30 per cent cuts in federal government funding to five community legal centres (CLCs) as well as the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania that was due to commence on 1 July 2017.

"CLCs across Tasmania were facing reduced service delivery as a result of the Federal Government's funding cuts to the sector, so it is a huge relief to be able to let the Tasmanian community know that the same level of service can continue to be provided," said Jane Hutchison, the Chair of Community Legal Centres Tasmania.

"We welcome the Tasmanian Government's commitment to cover the federal funding shortfall in the 2017/18 financial year. This commitment is an endorsement of the work of the sector and its essential role in providing legal services to vulnerable Australians - including women and children experiencing family violence, people with disability and people experiencing elder abuse - who cannot get legal assistance anywhere else," she said.

CEO of the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) Nassim Arrage also welcomed the move.

"We thank the Tasmanian Government for their commitment to cover the federal funding shortfall of CLCs," Mr Arrage said.

"However, we note that this funding is only for the next financial year. The only real solution to the current funding crisis is for federal, state and territory governments to work together to maintain the core funding that was made available for CLCs, while immediately injecting an additional \$200 million as recommended by the Productivity Commission.

"CLCs need secure, stable and adequate funding if they are to plan and continue to provide high quality legal services that meet community needs.

"We call on the Federal Government to show leadership and reverse the 30 per cent funding cut to the sector in the upcoming Federal Budget, and to work with state and territory governments to secure long term funding for CLCs.

"The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) looks forward to working with all levels of Government to ensure the Australian community has access to free, high quality legal services," he said.

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



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