

MEDIA RELEASE

TUESDAY 9 MAY 2017

BUDGET LIFELINE FOR COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) tonight welcomed an additional \$39 million in the Federal Budget for Community Legal Centres (NACLC), reversing the 30% cut to Commonwealth funding for CLCs that was due to take effect on 1 July 2017.

“Tonight we welcome the additional funding. It provides a critical lifeline for all those people who rely on the help of CLCs every day and for our centres and communities across Australia,” said NACLC Chief Executive Officer Nassim Arrage.

“The reversal will mean people across Australia will get access to the legal help they were going to be denied from 1 July if the funding cliff went ahead.”

“We have worked hard over a long period of time to emphasise the vital services that CLCs provide and the devastating impact cuts would have had - today the Government has recognised this”.

“We also welcome an additional \$3.4 million for six new domestic violence units at CLCs and Legal Aid Commissions”.

“There is still some uncertainty about the exact allocation of this new funding. Given the importance of certainty for our centres and communities, we look forward to receiving more detailed information”.

“This Budget addresses the immediate funding crisis for most CLCs, but there is more work to do”

“There is more work to do in ensuring increased, secure and long-term funding for the legal assistance sector. There is more work to do with Government towards a fairer society where anyone can receive legal help when they need it, not just when they can afford it”.

“CLCs are at the core of communities across Australia and almost every line in the Budget directly impacts a group of people we help”

“As a result, we are concerned about a number of measures in the Budget tonight, including in relation to social security that will have a negative impact on the people our centres help, contribute to the stresses on people that lead to legal problems, and to increased demand for our services”.

“We are also concerned about the lack of attention to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the justice system, and the ongoing failure to fund National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples.”

We do however welcome a number of Budget measures, including the additional \$16.7 million funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, \$1.2 million funding for knowmore as part of the National Redress Scheme establishment, and a number of family violence and family law initiatives.

To arrange an interview or for more information please contact:

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