



MEDIA RELEASE

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NACLC welcomes funding of Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, expresses concern about cuts to some CLCs

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) welcomes the announcement of the maintenance of funding for the 14 Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) across Australia under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) funding round, announced on 4 March 2015 by Minister Scullion.

The FVPLS provide vital frontline specialist and culturally safe legal assistance and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence. "FVPLS are a crucial element of the legal assistance system and are central to ensuring access to legal assistance for all members of our community. We enthusiastically welcome their continued funding" said Michael Smith, NACLC Chair.

While welcoming the announcement, NACLC has some concerns about the funding arrangements for FVPLS. In many cases the funding for FVPLS is only for 12 months. "Short term funding makes planning and delivering effective services difficult and erodes local community confidence. The FVPLS have had to allocate significant resources away from frontline service delivery to participate in the administratively demanding competitive tendering process of the IAS, that will now need to be repeated in less than 12 months time. This is inefficient and oppressive on busy service providers in this critical and specialist area" continued Mr Smith.

NACLC is also extremely concerned about cuts to a number of community legal centres (CLCs) that provide services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were also forced to competitively tender for funding under the IAS. Some CLCs have been told they will receive much less funding from 1 July 2015, forcing cutting of services, particularly to women in remote areas.

For example, the Katherine Women's Information and Legal Service, which provides legal assistance and support to women in Katherine, as well as conducting outreach services to remote communities, is facing a major funding cut of over \$200,000 pa. Over 60% of this CLC's clients are identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

For further information or to arrange an interview contact NACLC Chair Michael Smith on 0421 437 883

NACLC acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands across Australia and particularly the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, traditional owners of the land on which the NACLC office is situated. We pay deep respect to Elders past and present.