



MEDIA RELEASE

11 February 2015

NACLC welcomes comments by UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women

NACLC welcomes comments made by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences, Rashida Manjoo, today during her visit to Australia.

Ms Manjoo spoke at the Australian Human Rights Commission today on 'Continuing and New Challenges in the Quest to Eliminate Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences'. Ms Manjoo highlighted funding cuts to services, including those undertaking legal, policy and advocacy work as one of the key challenges.

Ms Manjoo also emphasised that the Australian Government is the "ultimate duty bearer" and should not be able to abdicate its responsibility to respect, protect and promote the human rights of all people, and specifically women and girls, including through funding NGOs and community organisations.

"Ms Manjoo's comments reinforce the calls made by people like Rosie Batty about the need for Australian Government funding for services that assist people experiencing family violence" said National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) Chair, Michael Smith. "The funding cuts and uncertainty for Community Legal Centres (CLCs), Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and other legal assistance services have, and will continue to have, a major effect on our clients, who are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community", said Mr Smith.

In particular, Ms Manjoo emphasised the cost benefit of non-government organisations providing services to women experiencing family violence. Mr Smith, highlighted that in an Australian context the results of an independent study commissioned by NACLC "conservatively found that CLCs have a cost benefit ratio of 1:18; that is, for every dollar spent by government on funding CLCs, they return a benefit to society that is 18 times that cost".

"NACLC calls on all levels of Government to commit the additional \$200 million identified in the recent Productivity Commission Report as being required to adequately fund legal assistance services in Australia" Mr Smith concluded.

For further information or to arrange an interview contact NACLC Chair Michael Smith 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.