



MEDIA RELEASE

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ALP Commits to Additional Funding for Community Legal Centres to Keep People Experiencing Family Violence Safe

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) welcomes today's commitment by the ALP to additional funding for community legal centres across Australia to provide vital legal help to people experiencing family violence as part of a package of measures to be introduced if elected.

The funding commitment was announced this morning by Opposition Leader Bill Shorten, Shadow Minister for Women Tanya Plibersek and Shadow Minister for Preventing Family Violence Linda Burney as part of the launch of the ALP's Women's Policy. Specifically it includes:

- \$42.5 million over 3.5 years (from January 2020) for community legal centres across Australia to provide legal and related help to people experiencing family violence
- \$21 million over 3.5 years to double the number of Specialist Domestic Violence Units and Health Justice partnerships (currently run by community legal centres and Legal Aid Commissions) that provide specialist support to people experiencing family violence

"Community legal centres play a vital role in providing expert community-based and holistic legal help to people, particularly women and children, experiencing family violence. Family violence remains one of the top areas of law in which community legal centres provide free help to hundreds of thousands of people every year" said Nassim Arrage, Chief Executive Officer of NACLC.

"We help with immediate issues such as safety planning and protection orders as well as family law, credit and debt, ensuring safe housing and supporting people to access social security or remain in employment that are related to or impacted by a person's experience of violence".

"We welcome the ALP's recognition of the importance of addressing family violence in our communities as well as recognising the vital role that community legal centres plays in helping people experiencing family violence".

"We have already seen the difference that the existing specialist units have made to the lives of women and children across Australia and welcome this commitment to expand this important model".

We also welcome the other measures included in the announcement today, including in particular:

- \$21.5 million for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services which are vital part of the legal assistance sector and provide assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experiencing family violence
- Additional funding for refuges and emergency accommodation; Flexible Support Packages and Frontline Service Grants
- Funding for 25 Family Violence Specialists in Centrelink to provide support for people experiencing family violence, building on advocacy undertaken by the National Social Security Rights Network
- Commitment to ten days paid domestic violence leave as part of the National Employment Standards

“Community legal centres also provide vital support to people who experience other kinds of disadvantage and discrimination. It is crucial that we address family violence and it is also important that there is funding to support core services delivered by the sector across other areas of law. We continue to call on the Government and the ALP to support the sector and provide core funding to ensure we can help people experiencing discrimination and disadvantage across Australia” Mr Arrage concluded.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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