



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **ALP Commits to Establishing New National Community Legal Centre for Small Business and Farmers**

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) welcomes today's commitment by the ALP to funding for a new national community legal centre that provides help to small businesses and farmers across Australia if elected.

The funding commitment was announced this morning and will provide \$10 million per year for the establishment of the new national service, which will be funded from the ALP's proposed \$640 million Fairness Fund.

"We know that farmers and small business owners, particularly in areas affected by drought, need legal help. However, they are currently missing out because community legal centres and other services do not have sufficient funding or the resources to support to people with small business legal issues" said Nassim Arrage, CEO of NACLC.

"We have been calling for funding in this area and welcome the ALP election promise today to establish a national community legal centre that will provide information, advice and ongoing representation to farmers and small business owners across Australia".

"This service will ensure that vulnerable small businesses and farmers can get timely and integrated legal help to stop their legal problems spiralling out of control and to reduce the impact of these issues on the business or farm, their families and communities – as well as the broader economy".

Last month the ALP announced a commitment to \$120 million funding over 4 years for specialist financial services lawyers in community legal centres if elected.

"We also welcome the announcement today that part of the \$120 million announced by the ALP last month will be used to establish a specialist consumer and financial rights community legal centre in Queensland, the first of its type in Queensland".

"As a sector we have worked hard to make clear how important additional funding is to support people experiencing credit and debt issues. Community legal centres work extremely hard to help people who cannot afford a lawyer. However, the level of funding and resourcing is not enough to meet the rising demand."

"We welcome these commitments by the ALP as well as recent announcements by the Greens for additional funding in this area and continue to call on the Government to show its commitment to ensuring people can get the legal help they need."

"More broadly in addition to funding for specific work what we need more than anything is a significant increase to core funding for the sector in line with recommendations of the Productivity Commission and the more recent Justice Project" concluded Mr Arrage.

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

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