



**Turnbull announcement still leaves women in danger:
thousands will remain without access to frontline services**

**PRESS RELEASE
24 September 2015**

Fair Agenda are glad to see the Turnbull government's first funding announcement is focused on the family violence crisis - because this issue should be our nation's top priority, and governments should be doing everything needed to keep women safe.

We welcome today's announcements. They're a good start, but they're not enough. They will still leave thousands of women without access to the services they need to stay safe and escape their abusers.

"The federal government still isn't providing enough funding for critical frontline services like emergency accommodation and community legal centres. Or services to stop abuse - like men's behaviour change and primary prevention programs." says Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda.

"Every day the government chooses not to fully fund family violence services is a day it leaves women in danger."

Maintaining inadequate federal funding for community legal centres and specialist family violence services (funded through homelessness) means the federal government are forcing those services to turn women in need away – despite the fact that we know the time a woman reaches out for help to escape abuse is often a time she's at greater risk of violence.

To keep women safe we need to ensure everyone reaching out for help can get it – and that means not being turned away from a refuge when it's not safe for you to stay at home; and not being turned away when you need legal assistance to escape your abuser.

"We congratulate the federal government on making this it's first funding priority - and for the number of productive measures announced today. We particularly welcome investment in training for police and health service professionals, the emphasis on providing a holistic response, and the additional funding for 1800 RESPECT. But we urge them to make the further funding commitments needed to fully fund the services that support victims, and work to stop and prevent violence."

For example - Community Legal Centres play a critical role in ensuring women have the support they need to escape an abuser. Because unless a woman can find out where she stands with family law; how she'll be able to keep her children safe; how she'll be able to access shared funds or property; or even untangle debts and loans that might have been put in her name by her abuser - it can be very difficult for her to escape.

"There are 200 community legal centres around the country. And a third of the work they do is focused on helping women and children facing domestic violence. Right now, they are forced to turn away more than 150,000 people a year. The funding announced today is expected to increase some capacity, but thousands of women still won't be able to access the legal assistance they need to escape abuse." says Rosslyn Monro, National Association for Community Legal Centres.

Homelessness services - a critical part of the family violence response system, have to turn away 2,800 women fleeing family violence every year.

Family Support Services - which do critical work identifying and intervening to stop murders before they occur, have waiting lists in excess of 3 months. They're calling on the federal government for \$47 million of funding to be able to meet that need.

Family Violence Prevention Legal Services - which provide critical specialist and culturally safe services for Aboriginal women still need an additional \$28 million to meet demand for their service.

Further, the men's behaviour change and primary prevention programs needed to stop violence still don't have the funding they need.

To stop the crisis devastating our nation we need much more than this once off announcement – we need committed full funding for the services that support women when they try to escape abuse; and that stop and prevent violence.

NOTE: A breakdown of the urgent federal funding called for by the family violence sector can be found on the Fair Agenda website at www.fairagenda.org/media.

FOR COMMENT

Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda, 0435 597 976

Fiona McCormack, DV Vic, 0409 937 800

Moo Baulch, DV NSW, 0400 936 192

Rosslyn Monro, National Association of Community Legal Centres, 0407 633 084

NOTE: If you cover this story, or any story regarding violence against women and children, please include the following tagline:

If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit 1800RESPECT.org.au. In an emergency, call 000.

Men can access anonymous confidential telephone counselling to help to stop using violent and controlling behaviour through the Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491.