

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**3 May 2016**

### **Turnbull budget devastating and dangerous for women experiencing family violence**

A funding increase of just \$33 million a year to address violence against women and children will have dangerous consequences for those affected by family violence, warns Fair Agenda.

“The government is leaving thousands of women without the service support they need to be safe.” Says Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda.

“The Turnbull government said that family violence is a national priority - but tonight’s announcements don’t reflect that.

“The Prime Minister’s decision to leave thousands of women without access to services that they need to live free from danger is devastating.”

It’s good to see new funding, but \$33 million is woefully inadequate to deal with a national epidemic devastating lives and communities. It’s not even a fraction of what the Victorian Government has recognised is needed just in one state.

“The Treasurer has said that this government will ‘afford the things that need to be afforded’ – apparently keeping women safe doesn’t fall into that category.”

Last month we saw Victoria inject \$572 million of additional funding to address family violence service and system gaps just in that one state. The federal government needed to match that level of funding. That would have been \$4 billion over two years.

Instead the federal government will continue to inadequately fund a range of critical services, including:

- ❑ Family Violence Prevention Legal Services – a vital specialist service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, who face a vastly increased risk of murder and hospitalisation as a result of family violence. Only 14 centres are funded nationally; leaving many women without access.
- ❑ Community Legal Centres – which help over 215,000 people each year and are forced to turn away more than 160,000 people a year, including women affected by family violence. Family violence and family law work are the top two areas of demand for CLCs across Australia.
- ❑ Specialist domestic and family violence services – which aren’t resourced to respond to all police referrals, or to meet demand for crisis or outreach work. The Victorian Government recently announced \$103.9 million additional funding over two years to address need for this service area in just that state.
- ❑ Perpetrator programs - which need \$38 million funding

Quotes from Antoinette Braybrook (Convenor, National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum)

“Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is at epidemic levels. It will cost the nation \$2.2 billion by 2021-22. Its moral cost – which sees lives lost and communities destroyed - is unquantifiable. Yet tragically a response to this violence is invisible in the Budget Papers.”

“Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) provide legal services and supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence. Further investment is needed to build the capacity of existing services and address service gaps to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women can access these services for safety.”

“Budgets set out the priorities of Government. Ending the disproportionate impact of violence against Aboriginal women should have been front and centre of this Budget.”

Quotes from Rosslyn Monro (Chair, National Association of Community Legal Centres)

“Community Legal Centres across Australia help women and children fleeing violence every day. A 30% cut to funding nationally will mean these women won’t get the legal help they need to maintain their safety”.

“Community Legal Centres help over 215,000 people each year, and we are forced to turn away over 160,000 more people each year, largely due to a lack of resources. This Budget failed to reverse the looming funding cuts or invest in legal assistance services to meet this demand”.

“The Women’s Safety Package announced last October was a welcome but small investment, however that investment will be diluted by a 30% cut to funding for Community Legal Centres across the country from 1 July next year”.

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**SPOKESPEOPLE AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT**

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**About Fair Agenda**

Fair Agenda is a community campaigning group of more than 35,000 Australians working for fairness and equality for women.