

**PRESS RELEASE**

**6 May 2016**

**Labor yet to commit funding needed to deliver on domestic violence promise**

The Labor Party is still yet to commit the service funding that is needed to deliver on its commitment to 'ensure women are safe at home and supported in the courts', warns Fair Agenda.

"Both Labor and the Coalition are paying lip service to the importance of treating domestic violence as a national priority. But so far both their funding commitments are woefully inadequate to deal with the major service gaps leaving women in danger" says Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda.

"Thousands of women are being left without the support they need to escape their abusers, because the federal government isn't adequately resourcing services" she added.

"Just weeks ago the Victorian Government announced \$572 million of additional funding to address service and system gaps in the state. A similar scale of investment is needed nationwide – the equivalent of \$4 billion over two years." Says Fiona McCormack, CEO of Domestic Violence Victoria.

Labor's [interim family violence funding package](#) provides over \$70 million over three years, including \$42.9 million for community legal centres, \$4.5 million for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and funding for a number of other measures.

The Coalition's recent Federal Budget [included \\$100 million over three years](#) to address violence against women and children. While it appears some of that funding will go to legal assistance services, however the details are not yet clear.

"Labor's commitment to funding for community legal centres, as well as broader support for CLCs, including for the policy, advocacy and law reform work we do is welcome and important for women affected by family violence and other vulnerable community members" says Rosslyn Monro, Chair of the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC).

"However, neither the Coalition's or Labor's funding commitment is enough to ensure women receive the legal help they need."

"Community Legal Centres help over 215,000 people a year and we are forced to turn away more than 160,000 people, including women experiencing family violence. We need reversal of the funding cuts as well as significant additional investment in legal assistance services and other frontline services."

"When a woman reaches out for help to escape her abuser, she is often at increased risk of violence and other retaliation – so if our governments aren't providing adequate service support

it has serious consequences for women's safety." adds Fiona McCormack, CEO of Domestic Violence Victoria.

"Unless there is a greater investment in Family Violence Prevention Legal Services thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women will be left without access to the services they need to be safe." Added Antoinette Braybrook, National Convenor of the Family Violence Prevention Legal Services.

More than 37,000 community members and 100 organisations have signed onto Fair Agenda's call for full funding of family violence services.

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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### Information on unmet needs across family violence services

- Specialist domestic and family violence services aren't resourced to respond to all police referrals, or to meet demand for crisis or outreach. Victoria recently committed \$103.9 million additional funding (over two years) to address funding deficiencies in this area in just one state.
- Community Legal Centres where the top two areas of work are family violence related, need reversal of \$34.83 million in funding cuts over the forward estimates as well as \$14.4 million additional funding per year to ensure access to legal help for hundreds of thousands of people, including women experiencing family violence
- Family Violence Prevention Legal Services need \$28 million additional annual funding to ensure national coverage of their specialist service.
- Perpetrator focused services are calling for \$38 million additional funding next year.

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

"Budgets set out the priorities of Government. All politicians are talking about their commitment to addressing family violence. If that's the case, ending the disproportionate impact of violence against Aboriginal women – who are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised and at 10 times greater risk of homicide should be front and centre in funding commitments."

"Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) provide legal services and supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence – but right now there are women across the country, particularly in metropolitan and urban locations, we just aren't resourced to reach. Your access to services for safety shouldn't depend on your postcode."

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

"Community Legal Centres across Australia help women and children fleeing violence every day. They 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."

"We need reversal of the funding cuts as well as significant additional investment in legal assistance services and other frontline services."

Quotes from Moo Baulch (CEO, Domestic Violence NSW)

“Australia’s domestic and family violence system is stretched to breaking point; and demand for specialist trauma responses and homelessness services continues to rise throughout the country.”

“Victoria’s Royal Commission into Family Violence found that domestic and family violence support services aren’t funded to cope with current demand or provide adequate responses to those affected by family violence – the half a billion dollar funding response from the Victorian government is the scale of resourcing we need to be dealing with this problem.”

**SPOKESPEOPLE AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT**

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

Rosslyn Monro – Chair of National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC), 0407 633 084.

Antoinette Braybrook - Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service (Contact via Andrew Gargett 0457 544 591).

**About Fair Agenda**

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