

## FAIR AGENDA

### **Government recognises frontline DV services “critical to save lives”, leaves thousands without access**

**12 May 2016**

Just \$30 million of additional funding to deal with family violence will mean thousands of women remain without the services they need to escape danger, warns Fair Agenda.

“The Ministers have said that “adequate investment in frontline services is critical to save lives” – and then announced vastly inadequate funding for those same services.” Says Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda.

“The woefully inadequate resourcing of family violence services is devastating and dangerous.” She added.

“It has taken half a billion dollars to address service and system gaps in just one state. We need the federal government to match Victoria’s recent response. We need \$4 billion of federal funding for family violence response over the next two years. Instead, the Government have chosen to leave thousands of women without access to the services they need to be safe.” adds Moo Baulch, CEO of DV NSW.

“The Government has had a chance to prove it is taking this issue seriously; and it has failed.”

“Specialist services can’t keep up with referrals from police. Refuges can’t shelter all the women seeking their help. Community legal services are being forced to turn away women relying on their help. Specialist services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aren’t even funded to have national reach.” Ms Baulch added.

Attorney-General Brandis and Minister Cash announced the \$30 million for legal assistance services (\$10 million per year over three years) as part of the three-year \$100 million package included in last week’s Federal Budget to implement the Third Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children.

“This week’s Four Corners episode has shone a light on just how much the system is failing Aboriginal women. Yet our domestic violence services still aren’t funded even to provide national reach.” Says Antoinette Braybrook, Convenor of Family Violence Prevention Legal Service.

“It will take another \$28 million per year to address unmet need for our service. Today’s announcement is completely inadequate to prevent Aboriginal women being murdered, and communities destroyed.” She added.

“This funding is manifestly inadequate no matter how it’s split up. How is \$10 million extra each year supposed to address the massive unmet need across 189 Community Legal Centres, lack of national reach in FVPLSs, and family violence work in ATSILs and Legal Aid?” Adds Ms Carr, Fair Agenda.

“Women are coming to Community Legal Centres with an urgent need for legal help to keep their children safe; to address financial abuse; to get an appropriate intervention order in place; and for a range of other legal problems – and inadequate funding means we have to turn women away.” says Daniel Stubbs, National Spokesperson for the National Association of Community Legal Centres.

“Today’s funding increase is good news – but it’s not enough to cover the funding cuts facing Community Legal Centres or meet increasing demand. Instead, Community Legal Centres - which are services that the Ministers have just recognised as being ‘critical to saving lives’ - are facing 30% funding cuts nationally.” He added.

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**

Renee Carr, [media@fairagenda.org](mailto:media@fairagenda.org), 0435 597 976

### Information on service funding needed

Domestic Violence NSW supports Domestic Violence Victoria’s call for the Federal Government to match Victoria’s per capita injection into family violence response – that’s an additional \$4 billion over two years.

### Specific service gaps

- 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. They need an additional \$28 million annual funding.
- Community Legal Centres – 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. They need an urgent reversal of the \$34.83 million of cuts over the forward estimates and a minimum additional investment of \$14.4 million per year.
- 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 - need \$38 million funding to increase and expand perpetrator interventions.

### **SPOKESPEOPLE AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT**

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

Moo Baulch, CEO of Domestic Violence NSW, 0400 936 192.

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

Daniel Stubbs, National Spokesperson, National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC), 0437 253 543.