



FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS, HEALTH SERVICES WELCOME: BUT COMMUNITY LAWYERS MISS OUT IN BUDGET

The Federation of Community Legal Centres – the peak body for community lawyers in Victoria – says community lawyers have missed out in this year’s State Budget.

“We commend the Andrews Government for ensuring that our public schools and health services have the support they need,” says Federation CEO Serina McDuff. “We welcome the support for people who are doing it tough – for those struggling with their mental health, striving to overcome substance addictions, or trying to stay in school.”

But the Federation is disappointed that there is no new funding for the rapidly escalating legal needs that community lawyers are seeing.

“Unfortunately, Premier Andrews has chosen to spend billions on police and prisons, which only make social problems worse, and less on long-term solutions, including community legal support” says Ms McDuff.

“When more police are on the streets, we know that it’s people experiencing poverty, children in state care, First Nations and migrant communities who are targeted and criminalised.”

“People of African appearance are at least 2.4 times more likely to be stopped by police than anyone else.”

“We’ve got more for police, more for prosecutors and more for jails. Yet there is no extra funding for community legal support. This is like sending ambulances rushing to the bottom of the cliff, when we can choose to stop people falling off in the first place.”

“Community lawyers offer long-term solutions so that people aren’t dragged into the quicksand of the justice system to begin with.”

“Whether it is standing up to dodgy landlords to keep people out of homelessness, helping people resolve unfair debts that are crippling them, or helping women to escape family violence situations, community lawyers ensure that people don’t fall off the cliff.”

The Federation has also expressed disappointment about a lack of funding for public housing.

“Everyone should have a place to call home. We can’t leave the future of public housing in the hands of private developers.”

“There are a lot of positive initiatives in this budget. But there’s a lot more to do in getting the balance right and ensuring that the focus is on long-term solutions.”

“We look forward to continuing these conversations with all parties in the lead-up to the election.”

For further information or to arrange interviews contact:

- Serina McDuff, CEO, Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria - 0451 411 479



Federation of
Community Legal Centres
VICTORIA

- Melanie Poole, Director of Engagement, Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria – 0401 518 562