



**Mark Speakman**  
Attorney General  
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Friday, 3 May 2019

### **MORE FREE LEGAL HELP FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS**

Victims of domestic and family violence will be among the 55,000 vulnerable people each year who will benefit from more than \$40 million in funding for the state's community legal sector, Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Mark Speakman announced today.

"Domestic violence victims, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, often face a range of complex issues when they take the brave step of seeking legal advice," Mr Speakman said.

"Through targeted funding for specialist domestic violence programs, we are addressing critical gaps in available services and ensuring more victims of domestic and family violence get the free legal help they need."

From 1 July 2019, the Women's Legal Service NSW, Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre and South West Sydney Legal Centre will receive more than \$6.7 million in funding over the next three years.

Dozens of CLCs across the state will also see an increase in their core funding for people who need free legal services, including victims of domestic and family violence. This announcement confirms that CLCs providing services to vulnerable members of the community will have their funding either maintained or boosted from 2016-17 levels, when the NSW Government committed to providing funding security to the sector.

Additional NSW Government funding has been allocated to establish new services targeting critical service gaps, including:

- a new law clinic and mediation service for seniors and their carers in the Hunter and Central Coast regions;
- free legal services in rural, regional and remote areas, particularly on the Mid-North Coast and in Far West NSW;
- disadvantaged people experiencing health-related legal issues at the Prince of Wales Hospital and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Sydney Local Health District; and
- migrant workers experiencing employment exploitation across NSW.

From 2019-20, the CLC sector will receive record funding of more than \$14 million per year from the NSW Government and the Public Purpose Fund.

“This landmark investment represents a state funding boost of over 85 per cent since 2015-16, including an additional \$5.2 million each year as part of the NSW Government’s reforms,” Mr Speakman said.

“CLCs are the unsung heroes of our local communities. Their dedicated individuals work at the coalface to help at-risk members of the community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children who have been victims of violence, people struggling with domestic and family violence, migrants and people with disabilities.

“The NSW Government will continue to champion the vital work of CLCs so their lawyers and staff have the resources they need to support their clients, now and into the future.”

Funding for the CLC sector has been prioritised by the NSW Government with the establishment of an innovative \$44 million ‘future fund’ earlier this year, the income from which can only be used for the benefit of the CLC sector.

In September 2017, the Attorney General commissioned Alan Cameron AO to review the way the Government supported CLCs. The Government adopted Mr Cameron’s recommendation for a new three-year funding model to provide stability to the sector and a new funding model to address areas of greatest legal need.

Executive Director of the peak body Community Legal Centres NSW (CLCNSW), Tim Leach, welcomed the significant boost in funding and the NSW Government’s ongoing commitment to the legal assistance sector.

“The NSW Government has provided increased funding for our sector every year since 2011, providing much-needed certainty to the people across the state who rely on our free services,” Mr Leach said.

“Our centres dramatically improve people’s lives and stop common problems spiralling out of control.”

An independent evaluation panel was appointed to assess all applications for the 2019-22 CLC funding against criteria which emphasised helping people with the greatest legal need and services providing value for taxpayer’s money.