

Media Release

The Hon Martin Pakula MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Racing



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VICTORIA CALLS ON COMMONWEALTH TO REVERSE SAVAGE CUTS

The Andrews Labor Government is calling on the Commonwealth Government to reverse its cruel cuts to Victorian community legal services.

Federal funding for Victorian community legal centres has been slashed by nearly 30 per cent after the Commonwealth decided to axe support for the vital community services from 2017-18.

Attorney-General Martin Pakula, Member for Batman David Feeney, and Member for Northcote Fiona Richardson visited the Darebin Community Legal Centre today, which will receive about \$130,000 less due to the Commonwealth cuts.

Across Victoria community legal centres provide free legal help to people facing economic and social disadvantage. The centres provide legal advice, information and representation to more than 100,000 Victorians each year on a range of matters including family violence, family law, and disputes and fines.

Under the Commonwealth's cuts, some of the centres will lose more than 50 per cent of their federal funding from 1 July 2017. To help offset these cuts, the Labor Government has invested \$5.7 million in Victorian CLCs over the past two years. This package included:

- \$2 million over two years through the Community Legal Centre Assistance Fund
- \$2.4 million to the Family Violence Duty Lawyer Fund
- \$1.3 million for the Community Legal Centre Family Violence Fund

This funding has meant more family violence victims receive the support they need at court and in the community. The grants have supported Victorian centres to deliver a range of family violence-related services including financial and tenancy advice.

In stark contrast to the Commonwealth's cuts, the Labor Government is also investing \$525 million to address the most urgent recommendations of the Family Violence Royal Commission.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Martin Pakula

"These cuts will put some of our most vulnerable people at risk and I urge the Commonwealth to reverse this cruel decision."

"While we're injecting more funding into legal centres, it's not possible to plug every hole left by these savage cuts."

Quote attributable to Federal Member for Batman David Feeney

"Organisations like Darebin Community Legal Centre are on the frontline providing support to victims of family violence. This attack on CLCs is heartless, irresponsible and counter-productive."

Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Fiona Richardson

"Funding for community legal centres is vital because they provide support to some of the most disadvantaged members of our community, including victims of family violence."

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