

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016-2017 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 2.1 Families and Communities

Question No: SQ17-000058

Topic: National Action Plan

Hansard page: Written

Senator Rachel Siewert asked:

Under the Third Action Plan of the National Plan To Reduce Violence Against Women And Their Children, there is a general commitment to improve support services for women fleeing domestic violence. Do you see the cut to core funding for community legal centres as consistent with this commitment?

Answer:

Of the \$100 million package for Commonwealth initiatives to support the Third Action Plan, \$30 million was allocated to front-line legal assistance and family law services to address family and domestic violence, including:

- \$18.5 million for legal aid commissions to establish integrated duty lawyer and family violence support services in family law court registries.
- \$6.2 million for selected Family Relationship Centres to deliver legally-assisted family dispute resolution to vulnerable families that are separating or have separated.
- \$5 million to extend funding for the specialist domestic violence units and health justice partnerships under the Government's Women's Safety Package by an additional year until 30 June 2019.
- \$0.3 million to improve the contribution of legal assistance data to the broader evidence base around family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia.

The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) has advised that the majority of legal assistance work relating to family law matters involving domestic violence is delivered by legal aid commissions, which will receive \$18.5 million through this funding package to deliver enhanced duty lawyer services in family law court registries. Funding legal aid commissions in targeted family law court locations will benefit clients, and relieve the pressure on the sector more broadly.

Community legal centres (CLCs) will directly receive \$4.1 million through the extension of the Women's Safety Package legal assistance pilots. Some CLCs and Indigenous legal assistance services are also likely to be involved in the delivery of legally-assisted family dispute resolution with Family Relationship Centres, and integrated duty lawyer services with legal aid commissions.

The Third Action Plan funding is in addition to the \$15 million provided under the Government's Women's Safety Package to eleven CLCs and two legal aid commissions to deliver specialist domestic violence units and health justice partnerships.

Further information requests about CLCs should be directed to the AGD.