

Media Release



Federation of
Community Legal Centres
VICTORIA

Budget needed more for legal assistance and family violence

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The Federation of Community Legal Centres has welcomed the additional \$13.7 million funding for legal assistance in the 2013–2014 Victorian State Budget, but is disappointed there has been no explicit allocation to meet growing demand in the State's community legal centres.

“The focus of the public debate has been on the impact of funding constraints on criminal representation by Victoria Legal Aid, but a failure to provide additional funding for community legal centres means that many more Victorians will miss out on free legal help for a range of serious problems such as family violence, employment and housing,” said Liana Buchanan, Executive Officer of the Federation of Community Legal Centres, today.

The Budget also failed to offer a significant investment in family violence, with just \$3.8 million over four years for men's behaviour change programs and adolescent violence in the home. While these programs are needed, the investment is inadequate, and there is nothing in the budget for urgently needed specialist family violence courts and support for women in the court process.

“This failure of investment compounds recent concerns over changes to the Coroners Court that we say will undermine its ability to address family violence homicides and other fatalities through strong, systemic recommendations to stop preventable deaths,” Buchanan said.

She welcomed the \$16.5 million over four years for victim support, but said that more investment was needed to focus effectively on the needs of victims beyond the extension of the victims support line and counselling.

Media contacts

Liana Buchanan
Executive Officer
Federation of Community Legal Centres
0407 189 221

Darren Lewin-Hill
Communications Manager
Federation of Community Legal Centres
0488 773 535