

# Media Release



Federation of  
Community Legal Centres  
VICTORIA

## **Royal Commission says Vic Govt should advocate at COAG on funding for family violence legal help**

**Wednesday 30 March 2016 – for immediate release**

Today's report of the Royal Commission into Family Violence has sent a strong signal in advance of Friday's COAG meeting that the State Government should advocate strongly for increased Federal funding to family violence legal help. The Federal Government is set to slash funding to community legal centres by 30 per cent nationally in July 2017.

The report acknowledges the central role of the courts and the intervention order process in an effective family violence response. While the Federal Government has proposed a national intervention order scheme, it is cutting the community lawyers who help women facing family violence secure intervention orders through the courts.

'Today's report has clear Federal implications, and highlights the deep gulf between the Federal Government's claimed commitment to ending family violence, and its actions in underfunding and cutting services in direct contradiction to a 2014 Productivity Commission report to which it has failed to respond,' said Dr Chris Atmore, senior policy adviser with the Federation of Community Legal Centres, today.

Speaking at the Victorian Premier's press conference this morning, family violence campaigner Rosie Batty said that 'Federal Government cuts to community legal centres have a significant impact for victims of family violence every single day'.

'We agree. Without free legal help with intervention orders, women and children are at far greater risk of abuse, injury and death – Federal Government cuts are placing barriers between women and children and their pathways to safety,' Dr Atmore said.

She said the report makes welcome recommendations to strengthen the courts and the intervention order process, to reform the law, to include family violence experts in the development of solutions, and to take systemic measures that would build consideration of family violence into decisions about State Government policies and initiatives. She said the report would also lead to a deeper focus on learning from family violence homicides to prevent future deaths.

'We agree with the Victorian Premier that funding action on family violence is an investment, not a cost. We also agree that the cost of not acting is in human lives and billions of dollars. We hope that message is taken to COAG this Friday,' Dr Atmore concluded.

### **For media interview and information**

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