



## Women's Legal Services Australia

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **Domestic violence advocates welcome much needed funding for legal assistance services and call for some funding to be directed to specialist legal services**

Women's Legal Services Australia welcomes the Government's announcement of an additional \$63.3 million for the legal assistance sector to provide services during and in response to COVID-19. We further welcome 40% of this funding being used for matters involving domestic violence.

"We have seen an increase in COVID-19 related family law matters where family violence is being used by a father against the mother and children. We are concerned for the safety of children and adult victim-survivors. We welcome the Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia and Chief Judge of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia, the Hon Will Alstergren, establishing a special COVID-19 list where parenting matters related to COVID-19 can be urgently listed within 72 hours," says Chief Executive Officer, Women's Legal Service Queensland and Women's Legal Services Australia spokesperson.

"It is important that the COVID-19 list is supported by access to legal advice and representation. Some of the money for the legal assistance sector announced today must go to specialist women's legal services around the country and community controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services who are helping women to navigate their way through the family law system and prioritise the safety of children. This is particularly important for victim-survivors during and post COVID-19 times", says Liz Snell, Law Reform and Policy Co-ordinator, Women's Legal Service NSW and Women's Legal Services Australia's spokesperson.

"We also welcome much needed funding to help legal assistance services adapt how they deliver their services during COVID-19 times, including to cover IT costs involved in transitioning to more virtual and online services. It is vital that people are able to access the legal support and representation they need during and after COVID-19," says Ms Lynch.

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#### **About WLSA**

Women's Legal Services Australia is a national network of community legal centres specialising in women's legal issues. We are part of Community Legal Centres Australia.

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