

Family Law changes are supported by key legal assistance services

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Women's Legal Services Australia, representing 13 Women's Legal Services including 2 First Nations services and National Legal Aid, representing the eight State and Territory Legal Aid Commissions, have joined together in support of the Family Law Amendment Bill, due to be debated in Parliament this week.

Women's Legal Services and Legal Aid Commissions provide legal assistance in often the most complex family law matters and see the opportunities for improving the system to better support separating families to make parenting decisions, help keep victim-survivors of domestic and family violence and children safe and promote the best interests of children.

"In 2021-2022 Legal Aid Commissions provided over 23,000 grants of legal aid for family law matters nationally. Family violence is a factor in nearly 86% of all legally aided cases before the family law courts." said Louise Glanville, Chair of National Legal Aid.

"From our work, we see how important it is to consider the best interests of children and the safety of victim-survivors. The changes proposed in the Family Law Amendment Bill appropriately put the best interests of children at the heart of care arrangements for families post separation."

"The Family Law Amendment Bill is based on recommendations made by the Australian Law Reform Commission's Inquiry into the Family Law System which involved extensive consideration of the issues and consultation with a wide range of experts." said Louise Glanville.

"These changes are long overdue and will significantly improve the family law system's ability to ensure the safety of victim-survivors and children." said Elena Rosenman, Chair of Women's Legal Services Australia

We hope that the Australian Parliament will consider the Bill with an understanding of the impact these changes will have on victim-survivors and children affected by domestic and family violence and the considerable support they will have amongst the community and help ensure it is enacted as swiftly as possible."

Both Women's Legal Services and National Legal Aid agree that it is critical that the family law system is appropriately resourced, alongside the legislative changes.

"The family law system works best when there is legal assistance available for all parties, including children."

"We look forward to working with the Federal Government within the upcoming review of the National Legal Assistance Partnership to provide advice on the increasing demand for our services and identify additional investment for Legal Aid Commissions and Women's Legal Services in the family law area." said Louise Glanville.

“This needs to include greater access to family violence and trauma informed services for victim-survivors and expansion of culturally safe services for First Nations families.” said Elena Rosenman.

The Women’s Legal Services Australia and National Legal Aid joint statement on the Family Law Amendment Bill can be found [here](#).

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