

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Injection of Funds from ALP and Greens welcomed – Government needs to match promise**

**20th June 2016**

Community Legal Centres Tasmania today welcomed the Australian Labor Party’s election commitment of $1,470,000 for five community legal centres throughout Tasmania – Hobart Community Legal Service, the Tenants’ Union, the Launceston Community Legal Centre, the Women’s Legal Service and the North West Community Legal Centre. The commitment comes several days after the ALP committed to restoring funding to Environmental Defenders Offices across Australia and the Australian Greens committed to fund the legal assistance sector in accordance with the Productivity Commission’s recommendations.

Jane Hutchison, the Chair of CLC Tas said:

We welcome the commitment by both the ALP and the Greens to provide significant additional funding to the legal assistance sector. Without a much needed cash injection, centres face staff cuts and reduced service delivery, which will leave many vulnerable clients to navigate through a complex court system without our help.

Access to justice is critical to ensure a fair society. We call on the Liberal/National Coalition to at least match the ALP’s election commitment and reverse damaging cuts that threaten these important services.

The release of the ALP’s election commitment comes after sustained campaigning from the legal profession to adequately fund the legal assistance sector, including Community Legal Centres and Legal Aid. In 2014, the Productivity Commission recommended that an additional $200 million be invested annually in the sector.

Jane Hutchison said:

Whilst the additional $1,470,000 funding from the ALP for five community legal centres throughout Tasmania is welcomed, other community legal centres and Legal Aid still face funding cuts. The entire legal assistance sector needs a funding boost and we call on all parties to match the Productivity Commission’s recommendations.

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