

MEDIA STATEMENT
May 5, 2016



Cash Commitment Welcomed For DV Legal Assistance Funds Vital for Perfect Storm of DV Legal Problems

Australia's peak legal aid body welcomes the Federal government's commitment to provide vital new funding for domestic violence legal assistance.

The Minister for Women, Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash, has told Radio National that additional funding will be detailed during the coming Federal election campaign. [Click here to hear Senator Cash's remarks \(from timecode 6.40-8.40\).](#)

The following comments are from Suzan Cox QC, the Chair of National Legal Aid. They detail why legal assistance is crucial for domestic violence victims.

"When domestic violence victims come to a legal aid commission, our first priority is their safety and wellbeing. After that, we help them tackle what can often amount to a perfect storm of legal problems.

"Domestic violence victims face legal issues relating to the abuse and separation. They include, for example, tenancy and property problems, as well as parenting, access and custody issues, plus other family law dilemmas.

"They are often in urgent need of legal help regarding intervention orders, migration matters and Victims of Crime compensation.

"Victims need advice regarding debt, accommodation, financial assistance and child support matters.

"It is therefore vital for these victims to be able to access legal assistance safely – and quickly.

"Legal aid commissions are the main providers in Australia of domestic violence legal services as well as inter-related legal services in the areas of family law, child protection and criminal law.

"We've worked in this area for decades – helping victims, assisting their safety and wellbeing, and providing a wide range of highly practical legal assistance.

"Legal aid commissions are an established national resource. Now, more than ever, we stand ready and fully committed to working with all governments to further address the response to domestic violence and the impacts it has on the community.

Background: National Legal Aid represents Australia's biggest legal assistance providers - the legal aid commissions in each State and Territory. Its members provide the majority of services in the legal assistance sector.

Suzan Cox QC (pictured) is available for interview.
Media contact: Jeremy Boylen M 0421 611 856