



Federal Pre-Budget Submission 2025-26

The Treasury

31 January 2025

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country, recognise their continuing connection to land, water, and community, and pay respect to Elders past and present.

We acknowledge the victim-survivors of domestic, family, and sexual violence who we work with and their voices and experiences which inform our advocacy for justice, equality, and safety for women.

About Women's Legal Services Australia

Women's Legal Services Australia (**WLSA**) is the national peak body for 13 specialist Women's Legal Services in each state and territory across Australia, including two First Nations Women's Legal Services. We provide a national voice for Women's Legal Services to influence policy and law reform, and advocate to increase access to gender-specialist, integrated legal services for women.

About WLSA Members

Women's Legal Services provide high quality free legal services for women, including legal advice and representation, support services and financial counselling, community legal education, training for professionals, and engage in advocacy for policy and law reform. Some Women's Legal Services have operated for more than 40 years.

WLSA members include:

- Women's Legal Service Victoria
- Women's Legal Service Tasmania
- Women's Legal Service NSW
- Women's Legal Service WA
- Women's Legal Service SA
- Women's Legal Service Queensland
- North Queensland Women's Legal Service
- First Nations Women's Legal Service Queensland
- Women's Legal Centre ACT
- Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre NSW
- Top End Women's Legal Service
- Central Australian Women's Legal Service
- Katherine Women's Information and Legal Service

Please note the National Access to Justice Partnership 2025-30 lists three organisations as Women's Legal Services that are not currently members of WLSA.

Contact us

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Overview

This submission outlines the case for a strategic investment in legal services essential to supporting women who are victim-survivors of domestic, family, and sexual violence.

Whilst the National Access to Justice Partnership 2025-30 (NAJP) will provide a significant boost in Commonwealth funding for Women's Legal Services nationally, there are still significant gaps in the capacity of service providers to meet the growing needs of women due to historic and chronic under-investment.

For example, in 2023-2024, Women's Legal Services **delivered legal assistance and non-legal support services to over 26,000 women nationwide**. However, national data also shows that **more than 1,000 women per week, or approximately 52,000 women per year, were turned away** from our services.

The ability to close the divide between the demand for services and the capacity of service providers to meet it is complex, but includes:

- Escalating pressures within families due to the cost-of-living crisis
- The increasing rate and severity of natural disasters
- A rise in tech-facilitated violence
- Online misogyny
- Deficient funding in smaller jurisdictions
- Lack of pay parity for staff
- Legislated wage increases

As the national peak body for 13 specialist Women's Legal Services in each state and territory across Australia, including two First Nations Women's Legal Services, WLSA has carefully assessed investments which will make a sustained and meaningful difference to the ability of services providers to meet the needs of women needing support.

That is why we recommend:

- \$52 million over five years to meet increasing demand for legal assistance from women in crisis, improve pay parity for Women's Legal Service staff, and expand migration law expertise for women on temporary visas experiencing violence.
- \$15 million over three years to expand the successful pilot program providing trauma-informed legal assistance for victim-survivors of sexual assault.
- \$1.436 million over five years to support WLSA as a national peak body, ensuring a strong advocacy voice on law reform and policy issues affecting women.



Executive Summary

Women's Legal Services are an important and distinct part of the legal and social services system in Australia. Our singular focus is assisting women with their legal issues and working towards achieving gender equality. We have decades of experience providing trauma-informed and integrated legal services, and our work is driven by the lived experiences of women who are victim-survivors of domestic, family, and sexual violence.

The National Access to Justice Partnership 2025-30 (NAJP) will provide a significant boost in Commonwealth funding for women's legal services nationally. For the first time, the agreement provides a dedicated funding stream for specialised legal assistance for women which is a major step forward. However, demand for specialist women's legal services continues to grow, driven by rising rates of domestic and family violence, sexual violence, and gender inequality.

Women's Legal Services in smaller jurisdictions, such as the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, have only received a small increase in funding which only ameliorates, in part, the effects of chronic underfunding. Critically, the funding allocated to date will not enable these services to assist more women. Further investment in Women's Legal is urgently needed to address the significant demand and complex needs of women in crisis, particularly First Nations women.

In 2023-2024, Women's Legal Services delivered legal assistance and non-legal support services to over **26,000 women** nationwide. Thousands of other women who sought assistance from Women's Legal Services had to be turned away due to lack of capacity. In 2023, we collected national data which showed that more than 1,000 women per week, or approximately 52,000 women per year, were turned away from our services. Alongside this, data shows reporting of family violence incidents to police is increasing.¹

There are a number of factors contributing to the growing prevalence of family and domestic violence in the Australian community, despite the increasing level of public discourse. These include:

1. Cost of Living Crisis

The escalating cost of living crisis in Australia is anticipated to exacerbate the prevalence of domestic and family violence within the community.

Financial stress is a well-documented factor contributing to domestic and family violence, with some research indicating that up to 90% of women seeking support for domestic and family violence have experienced financial abuse². The current economic climate intensifies these pressures, making it increasingly difficult for victim-survivors to leave abusive relationships due to financial constraints. In 2017, it was estimated to cost approximately \$18,000 for a victim-survivor to leave a violent relationship and establish safety—a figure likely higher now due to rising living costs.³

The rising cost of living will lead to an increase demand for specialist Women's Legal Services, at a time when Women's Legal Services are already struggling to meet demand.

Women's Legal Services are forced to turn away an estimated 52,000 women nationally per year

¹See eg. *Crimes Statistics Agency Victoria, 2023-24 Family Violence Dashboard* <<https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/family-violence-data/family-violence-dashboard>>, accessed 23 January 2025.

² Bullen, J., Cortis, N., and Hill, T. (2016). *Responding to economic abuse* (Issues paper 2). UNSW Social Policy Research Centre.

³ACTU Study, 2017 <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/cost-of-fleeing-violent-relationship-is-18-000-and-141-hours-actu/s46y8lg0c>

2. Compounding Disasters

The increasing frequency and severity of compounding disasters in Australia, such as bushfires and floods, impose significant financial pressures on families. These events often lead to loss of income, property damage, and increased living costs, intensifying economic stress within households. Research indicates that such financial strain can escalate existing domestic violence and even trigger new instances of abuse.⁴ For example, following the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, there was a reported increase in family violence incidents.⁵

Women in abusive relationships face heightened vulnerability during these times, as financial dependence on their abusers can hinder their ability to seek safety and support.⁶ Consequently, the compounded effects of natural disasters and financial hardship necessitate enhanced support services to protect and assist women in violent situations.

3. Tech-facilitated Violence

In Australia, domestic and family violence has evolved, with notable increases in financial abuse and technology-facilitated violence. Technology-facilitated abuse has emerged as a significant concern.⁷ Perpetrators exploit digital platforms and devices to monitor, harass, or intimidate victims, employing methods like unauthorised access to online accounts, cyberstalking, and the dissemination of private information without consent.⁸

These evolving abuse tactics place additional demands on Women's Legal Services. As abuse tactics become more sophisticated, the necessity for specialised, interdisciplinary approaches within support services becomes increasingly critical to ensure the safety and empowerment of women experiencing domestic and family violence. To effectively support affected women, these services must integrate legal assistance with technological expertise to address the multifaceted nature of modern abuse.

4. Misogyny Online

In recent years, there has been a notable rise in online anti-gender equality sentiment, often referred to as the "manosphere," where misogynistic ideologies are propagated and amplified.⁹ This digital environment fosters attitudes that devalue and objectify women, contributing to a backlash against gender equality.¹⁰ Research indicates that exposure to such online misogyny can desensitise individuals to gender equality issues, leading to increased acceptance of abusive behaviours.¹¹

This cultural shift has significant implications for the prevalence of abuse among young people in particular.¹² The normalisation of misogynistic attitudes online are likely to lead to an increase in abuse, including emotional, psychological, and physical violence. The escalation of such abuse directly impacts the demand for specialist legal services dedicated to supporting women. Women's Legal Services throughout Australia are likely to experience increased caseloads, requiring specialised expertise to address the complex dynamics of abuse rooted in online misogyny. This includes understanding the influence of digital platforms in facilitating abuse and implementing comprehensive support systems that encompass legal assistance, counselling, and digital literacy education to effectively support affected women.¹³

⁴ <https://nousgroup.com/insights/domestic-abuse-natural-disasters?r=AU>

⁵ Respect Victoria, January 2025 <https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/news/understanding-link-between-climate-disasters-and-gendered-violence>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/jun/30/war-zone-stuff-women-14-times-more-likely-to-die-in-natural-disasters>

⁷ E-Safety Commission <https://www.esafety.gov.au/women/reduce-technology-facilitated-abuse>

⁸ https://www.aic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-10/crg_technology-facilitated_coercive_control_v7.pdf

⁹ <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/political-science/articles/10.3389/fpos.2022.909811/full#note10>

¹⁰ <https://www.dazeddigital.com/life-culture/article/58452/1/young-people-and-the-rise-of-antifeminism-gender-equality>

¹¹ Ipsos <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/masculinity-and-womens-equality-study-finds-emerging-gender-divide-in-young-peoples-attitudes>

¹² <https://stepstogether.nsw.gov.au/violent-extremism/mental-health-and-violent-misogyny-online.html>

¹³ <https://webfoundation.org/2021/03/how-online-gender-based-violence-affects-the-safety-of-young-women-and-girls/>

Additional funding would help ensure Women's Legal Services have capacity to meet increasing demand and the increasingly complex needs of victim-survivors of domestic, family, and sexual violence. It would also help address issues such as community legal sector pay disparity, which make it challenging for some Women's Legal Services to recruit and retain staff, particularly in remote, regional and rural areas.

We are also seeking further funding for two specific areas of significant need where pilots are delivering positive outcomes for clients. Firstly, funding to expand the pilot program providing trauma-informed legal assistance for victim-survivors of sexual assault to every state and territory. Secondly, funding for more Women's Legal Services to establish or continue to operate a migration law practice and better meet demand.

Our funding asks

1. An additional **\$52 million over 5 years** under the NAJP for Women's Legal Services to:
 - a) help meet increasing demand for services from women experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence and increasing complexity in support required;
 - b) provide pay increases for Women's Legal Services staff to equivalent salaries at Legal Aid Commissions;
 - c) meet legislative requirements in relation to increases in wages and superannuation without the need to reduce staff;
 - d) establish or continue to operate a migration law practice to meet expected increases in demand for legal assistance from women on temporary visas experiencing violence; and
 - e) hire specialist lawyers with expertise in Hague Convention matters.
2. An additional **\$15 million over 3 years** to establish another 5 pilot sites for trauma-informed legal assistance for victim-survivors of sexual assault so they have access to independent legal representation in New South Wales, Tasmania, Northern Territory, South Australia and Queensland.
3. An additional **\$1.436 million over 5 years** in grant funding for WLSA as a national peak body to better enable the women's legal sector provide a strong national voice on policy and law reform issues impacting women.

Additional funding under the National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP)

A. Increasing demand for assistance and complexity of support needs

The NAJP recognises the vital role of specialist legal assistance for women, providing Women's Legal Services with \$275.7 million over five years from 2025-26 onwards. This represents an additional approximately \$10 million per year for Women's Legal Services above funding under the current National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-25 (NLAP). This investment will help many Women's Legal Services enhance their capacity to meet service demand levels, however it will not enable the Women's Legal Services in smaller jurisdictions to do so, and it will not be sufficient to meet increasing demand or complexity in support required for women in crisis.

In some states, the additional funding will allow Women's Legal Services to expand their reach and provide greater assistance to women in crisis. In smaller jurisdictions, the additional investment will provide some relief to ameliorate the effects of chronic and historic underfunding. With turnaway and other data showing that demand for specialist women's services is increasing nationally, the NAJP

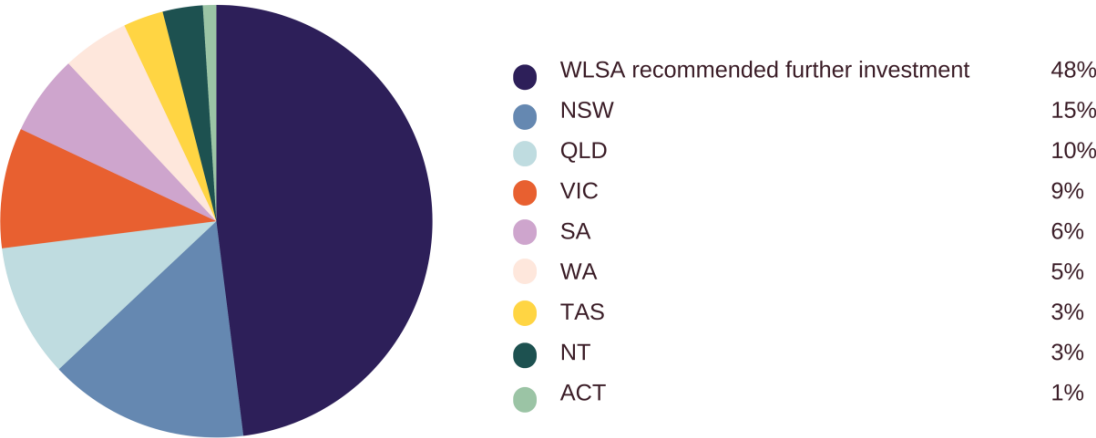


investment will sadly not deliver a significant uplift in specialist services available to women in many jurisdictions across Australia.

Further funding is required to meet increasing demand and increasing complexity of assistance required by women in crisis. Many clients are experiencing trauma and financial disadvantage and require wraparound legal and non-legal support services (such as social workers and financial counsellors) to effectively address their legal problems. Some clients also require assistance with legal matters across multiple areas of law. Women’s Legal Services deliver services through an integrated practice model; however, critical non-legal support services are often overlooked in terms of funding.

The below figure demonstrates the increase in funding for Women’s Legal Services in each state and territory under the NAJP in 2025-26 (compared to funding in 2024-25), and how this compares to the further investment in the NAJP we are recommending for Women’s Legal Services in the 2025-26 Federal Budget.

Figure 1 - Comparison of NAJP investment to recommended investment FY25/26



Additional funding would ensure Women’s Legal Services can better meet the demand for assistance and operate a best practice service delivery model, including expansion of health justice partnerships, domestic violence units and other integrated service models.

B. Addressing the issue of pay parity for Women’s Legal Service staff

While the Commonwealth Government allocated \$300 million over 5 years under the NAJP for pay parity and indexation, after this amount is divided up among the legal assistance services, it will amount to only a modest increase for Women’s Legal Services. Our costings predict this funding will not be sufficient to provide pay parity for Women’s Legal Service staff.

Salaries in Women’s Legal Services and the broader community legal sector are significantly less than salaries for equivalent roles at legal aid commissions, government, and private practice. This is an issue that has been well-known for decades. For example, Community Legal Centres Queensland found that on average, community legal sector workers in Queensland earned 22% less than people working at Legal Aid Queensland in 2022-23.¹⁴ This issue is particularly relevant for staff at Women’s Legal Services who predominantly identify as women. It creates a gender pay gap in the legal profession

¹⁴ Community Legal Centres Australia (March 2024), *State of the Sector 2022-23 Survey Report: A Sector in Crisis*.



which disadvantages women working in lawyer roles in Women's Legal Services and the community legal sector.

The lawyers, social workers, First Nations caseworkers and financial counsellors who work on the frontline in Women's Legal Services are exposed to significant trauma and provide vital assistance to women experiencing disadvantage or gendered violence in our community. These workers should be paid appropriately for their contribution to the community.

Women's Legal Services find it difficult to compete in the lawyer market, particularly from mid-level roles and up, given their inability to offer attractive salaries. Studies have identified how recruitment and retention challenges are exacerbated for community legal centres in rural, regional, and remote areas, particularly for lawyer roles. Additional funding under the NAJP for Women's Legal Services would help address low wages and pay disparity and ensure Women's Legal Services can provide competitive salaries to attract and retain staff.

C. Legislative requirements in relation to increases in wages and superannuation

Additional funding under the NAJP would assist Women's Legal Services to meet legislated increases in wages and superannuation, as well as meet any increases in the CPI, without the need to reduce staff. For example, funding under the NAJP will increase 2.21% between 2025-26 and 2026-27. This is not sufficient to meet increases in the CPI as well as required increases in wages and superannuation.

By way of example, the funding Women's Legal Centre ACT receives under the current National Legal Assistance Partnership is indexed at 1.6% for the 2023/24 financial year. Over the life of funding agreements, this equates to a total indexation of 4.6%. By contrast, the increase in the cost to employ a mid-level solicitor in the ACT was 27% over the same period. This is inclusive of annual Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHaDS) Award increases and superannuation guarantee increases under the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992* (Cth).

The current level of indexation in the NAJP is not sufficient to keep up with inflation or the true cost of delivering services. This, coupled with meeting legislated increases to wages and superannuation, means Women's Legal Services in jurisdictions that did not receive a significant funding boost, such as the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory, have started planning to reduce services, which means women in crisis will be turned away in 2025-26.

D. Migration law assistance for women on temporary visas experiencing violence

The *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-32* recognises the unique impacts of family violence on migrant women, and that migrant women face structural barriers other women do not, such as uncertainty about the impact of leaving a violent relationship on their visa status and eligibility for social security.

Since April 2021, seven Women's Legal Services across Australia have been funded to deliver the legal assistance component of the Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot, including access to legal assistance and non-legal supports for migration law and interrelated issues with family law, family violence and child protection. The Pilot has demonstrated an effective model for providing legal assistance and other supports to women on temporary visas to ensure they are able to live safely and free from violence, whether by remaining in Australia or returning to their home country.

The 2024-25 Federal Budget allocated \$16.5 million to extend the Pilot from 1 February to 30 June 2025, and for the provision of legal assistance to temporary visa holders from 1 July 2025 until 30 June 2028. A further \$5.1 million is provided for 2028-29. The funding from 1 July 2025 onwards has been transitioned into the NAJP and is part of the funding allocated to the quarantined funding stream for Women's Legal Services for those jurisdictions where a women's legal service is currently the Pilot partner.



This funding will enable legal assistance services to continue to provide the same level of service delivery to women on temporary visas experiencing violence as provided in previous years. However, there will not be enough funding to increase service delivery, despite the expected increase in demand following recent amendments to the *Migration Regulations 1994* to expand provisions available to visa holders experiencing domestic and family violence. The first stage of reforms came into effect on 17 December 2024.

The current quantum of funding is also inadequate for services to operate a sustainable migration law practice. For example, the annual amount of funding provided to some Women's Legal Services has not been enough to hire a second full-time legal practitioner, which creates significant risk for service continuity and sustainability (for example, if the staff member goes on leave). Services have used overflow monies to fill the gap and enable the recruitment of a further legal practitioner which is not sustainable. The limited funding puts added pressure on a female-dominated and under-resourced workforce, working in a high-pressure environment.

E. Specialist legal assistance for women who have taken a child overseas

In the 2023-24 Federal Budget, the Australian Government committed \$7.4 million over four years to introduce a financial assistance scheme to provide legal representation for parents who have taken a child overseas. This would ensure both parents involved in international child abductions cases under the Hague Convention have equitable access to government-funded legal assistance.

Many women who are the 'taking parent' in Hague Convention matters have experienced domestic and family violence. These women should have access to trauma-informed and gender-led legal assistance that is specific to their unique needs and provides access to integrated, wraparound support services. With additional funding, Women's Legal Services could hire specialist lawyers with expertise in Hague Convention matters who can assist women who have taken children overseas to flee domestic and family violence within a specialist, trauma-informed, and integrated service delivery model. This would lead to better outcomes for women accessing the financial assistance scheme.

Recommendation 1

An additional **\$52 million over 5 years** under the NAJP for Women's Legal Services to:

- a) help meet increasing demand for services from women experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence and increasing complexity in support required;
- b) provide pay increases for Women's Legal Services staff to equivalent salaries at Legal Aid Commissions;
- c) meet legislative requirements in relation to increases in wages and superannuation without the need to reduce staff;
- d) establish or continue to operate a migration law practice to meet expected increases in demand for legal assistance from women on temporary visas experiencing violence;
- and
- e) hire specialist lawyers with expertise in Hague Convention matters.

Additional pilot sites for trauma-informed sexual assault legal services

One in five women in Australia have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.¹⁵ The vast majority of sexual violence offences are not reported to police¹⁶, and conviction rates are very low. People who do report an offence and go through a court process are not a party to proceedings, although they may be a witness. Victim-survivors often tell Women's Legal Services they feel isolated and alone while navigating complex justice system processes, and have experienced difficulties accessing information, receiving advice, knowing their rights, and providing their views. We know the process is often disempowering and retraumatising for victim-survivors.

Victim-survivors of sexual violence need recognition and support, including legal assistance to participate in criminal justice processes in which they have an inherent personal interest. This would help reduce retraumatisation from the justice system process and to ensure that their substantive legal entitlements, such as rights to be consulted by police or the prosecution, rights to privacy, and rights to respectful and dignified treatment, are upheld.

The pilot program for trauma-informed sexual assault legal services

We were pleased to see \$8.4 million over three years in the October 2022-23 Federal Budget allocated for a pilot to provide victim-survivors of sexual assault with greater access to dedicated legal services to support their recovery and engagement with the criminal justice system. Women's Legal Centre ACT and Women's Legal Service WA were the successful recipients of this pilot funding, and Women's Legal Service Victoria is partnering on the pilot in Victoria.

The sexual assault legal services pilot program models differ slightly, but at their core deliver specialised, trauma-informed legal assistance to victim-survivors of sexual assault alongside social supports. The pilots help victim-survivors to understand and participate in the justice system process:

- In WA, Women's Legal Service WA, Aboriginal Family Legal Services and Ruah Legal Services are partnering to provide state-wide integrated and specialised legal services for victim-survivors of sexual assault. Clients are provided with legal assistance to make informed decisions, including assisting in understanding how the criminal, civil and/or administrative justice process works, what their options are, support navigating and engaging with the legal system, and advising and advocating victim-survivor's interests. The approach is trauma informed, person centred and includes integrated social and cultural supports. Services are targeted early in the victim-survivors legal pathway and at known points of withdrawal from the legal process. An end-to-end service is offered where possible.
- In the ACT, the Sexual Violence Legal Service operates out of the Women's Legal Centre ACT, in partnership with Victim Support ACT. A multidisciplinary team of criminal solicitors and victim support workers provides legal advice, representation and wraparound support to empower clients to make the right decisions for them. The legal advice provided covers the entirety of a client's engagement with the criminal justice system and referrals are accepted at any stage of the process, including prior to reporting to police, during an investigation, throughout any subsequent prosecution and beyond. The legal representation provided includes seeking leave to appear in court as an interested party, where appropriate. The wraparound support includes

¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021-22), *Personal Safety, Australia*.

¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021-22), *Personal Safety, Australia*.



information regarding the criminal justice process, assistance lodging complaints under the Victims of Crime Charter, and referrals through to brokered counselling services.

- In Victoria, Women's Legal Service Victoria has partnered with Victoria Legal Aid and Djirra in the expansion of the Victims Legal Service (VLS). Legal information, procedural advice, and referrals for victim-survivors of sexual violence are provided through the existing VLS Helpline, as well as targeted advice, casework and representation for victim-survivors seeking to protect confidential communications made to health and counselling professionals during court proceedings. Clients can also access support for intersecting legal issues and to social work and financial counselling support as required. The model also provides tailored support for Aboriginal victim-survivors to report sexual assault to police.

Expanding the pilot to every state and territory

The pilot should be expanded across the country to test different models in each jurisdiction, allow all victim-survivors to have access to legal assistance, and enable all Women's Legal Services to support victim-survivors' recovery and engagement with the criminal justice system and alternative avenues.

Many Women's Legal Services are already working with victim-survivors of sexual assault and delivering services, as far as existing resources allow. We are calling for an additional \$5 million per year (plus indexation) to set up an additional 5 pilots in the remaining jurisdictions and ensure victim-survivors in every state and territory jurisdiction can access a pilot site.

Recommendation 2

An additional **\$15 million over 3 years** to establish another 5 pilot sites for trauma-informed legal assistance for victim-survivors of sexual assault so they have access to independent legal representation in New South Wales, Tasmania, Northern Territory, South Australia and Queensland.

A national peak body for Women's Legal Services

WLSA is recognised as a national peak body in the NAJP for its role as the national voice for Women's Legal Services, highlighting the critical role these services play in supporting women and advocating for systemic change. In addition to providing a national voice on policy and law reform issues impacting Women's Legal Services clients, WLSA builds the capacity of Women's Legal Services to provide best practice services and provides a forum for staff to work collaboratively and share resources.

The Federal Government and the Parliament regularly seek WLSA's input on the development of policy and legislation which requires extensive consultation with WLSA members, including input from staff and clients, and detailed technical legal analysis on legislation, case law, and the impacts on women and children.

The intersection of the cost-of-living crisis, increasing climate-related disasters, the rise of technology-facilitated violence, and growing online misogyny is intensifying pressures on women experiencing domestic and family violence. Financial insecurity, exacerbated by economic hardship and natural disasters, makes it more difficult for women to leave abusive relationships, while digital abuse and online radicalisation of misogynistic ideologies create new forms of harm. These evolving challenges require Women's Legal Services Australia to expand its advocacy efforts to secure increased funding, and support Women's Legal Services to develop specialist skills and implement wraparound legal and social



support services. Addressing these issues will require systemic reforms, including stronger legal protections, digital safety measures, and targeted policies that recognise the modern forms and drivers of abuse.

WLSA has been invited to apply for \$1.436 million over five years in grant funding under the Community Legal Services Program (CLSP). This is very welcome; however, it represents around half of the estimated funding required for WLSA's work. The work performed by WLSA in the past 12 months has required the equivalent of at least 3 full-time staff. Lack of adequate funding for WLSA means a significant proportion of WLSA's work is performed by senior staff employed by Women's Legal Services who would otherwise be managing their legal service, engaging in service delivery, or contributing to policy and law reform work within their state or territory.

Recommendation 3

An additional **\$1.436 million over 5 years** in grant funding for Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) as a national peak body to better enable the women's legal sector provide a strong national voice on policy and law reform issues impacting women.

