

Federal Election 2016 - Candidates respond to key legal issues facing communities in Melbourne's east

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Daniel Huppert, Independent

One of the reasons why funding to community legal organisations like ECLC have been cut, is because neither of the major incumbent political parties understand how to manage an economy. As an Independent Candidate for the seat of Aston, but aligned with the Australian Sovereignty Party, and having being their policy director for some time, we demonstrably have the strongest economic credentials of any of the minor parties, and arguably have a far better, more fair and equitable model for taxation and monetary policy than either of the major parties.

As such, without delving into precisely what these policies entail, as I will leave it to those interested to go and visit my website and learn more, the taxation model we propose, which has been modelled with full actuarial analysis, and has also been endorsed by some of the world's leading economists, can and will generate twice the current federal government revenue.

Therefore, if you ask what it is that I can do for organisations like yours. If, and that is a big IF I am able to reason with the Liberal and Labor parties who may hold power, to put aside their treacherous subservience to the multinational corporations and to the bankers, so that they will be willing to implement the only fair and just system of taxation that I am advocating for, then we will have access to a much larger budget. As this comes about, I can guarantee a LOT MORE funding for organisations like yours, more than you have been asking for.

However, you may find that considering the amazing economic stimulus these policies will generate, and the profound level of prosperity and freedom that will come about under this model, so many of the ordinary legal quandaries many people find themselves in today may well become a thing of the past, and hence the burden upon organisations like yours will be greatly reduced, not least because the average person will be so much better off financially, that they will be able to afford legal help anyway.

One of the causes of family violence as you may well know revolves around financial hardships. To treat this issue, I can say that if my tax and monetary policies were implemented, ordinary Australians will be so much better off financially, less stressed, more free, happier and healthier, that family violence will likely be drastically reduced, therefore reducing the burden upon organisations like yours to provide legal assistance in such circumstances.

I believe the family law courts and relevant legislation need a top down reformation. Children are often the victims of inappropriate and callous rulings made by family court judges, who bare no responsibility it seems to the welfare of children with respect to the judgements they make. I have spoken to both men and women who have gone through the family law courts, and it would seem that the biggest winners are none other than the lawyers themselves.

I support any measure that will bring about greater equity to the system, and also help prevent and or minimise any abuse. In this respect, any proposed changes that are biased against fathers I cannot endorse. The system appears to be heavily skewed in favour of women. I have heard of many cases where family courts have awarded custody of children to the mothers who are themselves abusive, addicted to gambling, and are arguably the poorest choice of the two biological parents.

In fact, from some of the reports that I have seen, it would appear that women are just as abusive as men, it is just that men (being the physically stronger of the two), are often too ashamed to admit that their female partners have been acting violently against them, smashing lamps and other furniture, and acting terribly. And should the men report it, often the women will claim the violence was done against them, and the bias is almost always to believe the woman over the man... this is yet another reason why violence and abuse against men goes under reported.

For these reasons, any just and equitable system must be fairly measured and must recognise that women can often be just as guilty in cases of violence and abuse. Moreover, greater thought must be paid to children, who are often for no justifiable reason restricted from seeing one of their parents (most often their father). This causes major emotional grief not only to the men, but also to the children. In fact, it has been reported that one of the prime causes of suicide amongst men, is because family courts have barred them from seeing their children.

Of course, in clear cases when either one of the parents are truly being violent, children must be protected immediately. I have come upon a lot of evidence that impugns the state child welfare agencies as being one of the most abusive organisations out there. I have seen statistics that suggest children are up to 7 times more likely to be raped or abused in the care of the state, than by any other demographic. So where possible, if children need to

be removed from genuinely abuse parents, then wherever possible suitable relatives should be found who may be able to care for the children.

"Genuinely abusive" must also be properly defined. I have heard of cases of children being removed from their loving parents because the parent refused to put their children on harmful anti-depressants, known to cause neurological damage and cause heart problems. This IS NOT a case of genuine abuse, and I think it a matter of total and complete tyranny that a loving and caring parent should have their rights to their own children removed because they made an educated decision not to comply with a doctors recommendations to put their children on drugs that are known to cause harmful side effects. This is disgusting.

There is a lot more I could say on this entire subject, but suffice it to say that the whole system is desperate for an overhaul.

Abuse of our nation's elders is symptomatic of a society that has lost its way. Our elders must be respected, loved, and well cared for. This can start from a government level by providing our seniors with the level of pension they need and deserve. Second to this would be a greater impetus on educating the young and the rest of society to honour and respect our elders.

Thirdly, in my pensioner policy, I advocate for tougher penalties upon those who would do harm to our nation's senior citizens.

I work closely with a number of leading Indigenous elders including Jaga Jaga Uluki Brendan Murray (The rightful chief of the Wah-Wurrung (woi-wurrung) tribe, which encompasses most of the Yarra Valley area including my electorate), Garry Jaggamara and Dr. Rex Japanangka, who are all good friends. There are many issues plaguing indigenous communities, and I can say that the elders have the better plan for dealing with them. We need to get behind and empower the rightful Indigenous Elders to exercise more authority over their communities to help deal with violence in the Indigenous communities. It is also important to realise the positive impact that my tax and monetary policies will have on such issues, but also my Citizens Service Scheme policy which will also help greatly reduce community violence and crime.

As an aside, let me also take this opportunity to say that it is important for people to start using the word "Originie", instead of "aboriginie". You need to understand the correct etymology of the word "Aboriginal". The Latin prefix "ab", means "away from", or "not", as it is used in words like abnormal (not normal), absent (not present), abstract (an idea, a thought, not having physical existence).

The word Aboriginal technically means "not original", or away from original. There are many moving within the Indigenous community who I support who are currently educating their fellow native Australians to this fact, and many now do not wish to be labelled as being "not original". Of course, in common parlance, people do not use the word aboriginal to mean anything other than native, but recognising that these words were created by colonists long before Australia was settled by Europeans, to attempt to disassociate the natives from the land, for justice to be done, we have to learn to use the correct terms when speaking of the first nation peoples.

I hope these answers to your questions meets your satisfaction.

Kind regards,

Daniel Huppert

Alan Tudge, Liberal

The Turnbull Coalition acknowledges the valuable contribution of community legal centres (CLCs) and we have made a substantial investment which recognises the vital work being done by the legal assistance sector.

The Coalition Government has committed \$1.6 billion over five years under a National Partnership Agreement on Legal Services Assistance with States and Territories and agreements with Indigenous legal assistance providers. The agreement which commenced on 1 July 2015, allocated funding to States and Territories following an evidence-based model and provided much-needed certainty to the legal assistance sector.

Apart from ceasing to fund Environment Defenders' Offices in 2013-14, there have been no cuts to community legal centre funding, or Indigenous legal assistance providers. Over the life of the National Partnership Agreement, legal aid funding will increase by \$12 million (or 6 per cent).

It is important to note that the Commonwealth Government is the primary funder of Indigenous legal assistance, despite more services being provided for State or Territory criminal matters.

As you would be aware, legal assistance funding is not a matter for the Commonwealth alone.

The Coalition is committed to improving the lives of all Australians and we will do what we can to increase funding levels for legal assistance in the tight fiscal environment. This has been clearly evidenced by the restoration of \$25.5 million in legal assistance funding in March 2015 and allocating \$45 million (including \$30 million in the 2016-17 Budget) to frontline legal assistance services for victims of domestic violence. We will consult closely with States and Territories and the sector regarding the allocation of the \$30 million for frontline legal services.

Through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, the Commonwealth Government provides funding for a range of Indigenous specific activities to tackle the acknowledged drivers of crime and to reduce Indigenous people's contact with the criminal justice system. This includes support for prisoners to reintegrate into their communities, prevention and diversion for young people, restorative justice and mediation. State and Governments are critical partners to addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in the criminal justice system.

In contrast, Labor has made ad-hoc funding promises. Rather than enhance base funding to ensure long-term sustainability of the legal assistance sector, Labor created the funding cliff facing frontline legal services by committing \$6.8 million per year for 4 years to 30 June 2017.

Labor needs to provide greater transparency on how it plans to fund CLCs rather than revert to the chaotic and arbitrary funding approach they took when in Government.

Casey

Hovig Melkonian, ALP

Labor has announced \$450,000 funding over 3 years for the ECLC. I hope to work with the Centre to maintain the ECLC's presence in Healesville at the Yarra Ranges Centre.

Under a Labor government, frontline legal services will receive \$42.9m in funding over three years from 1 July 2017 so they can continue their vital work.

This timetable will ensure funding beyond the next Parliament.

Labor will also provide \$1.5m a year in dedicated funding to Family Violence Prevention Legal Services - who seek to protect Indigenous women who have been affected by family violence.

Labor has announced a number of measures aimed at ending the scourge of family violence in our community:

- An annual statement to parliament on progress in eliminating family and domestic violence.
- A commitment to responding to the recommendations of the Final Report of the COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence Against Women and their Children, and the recommendations of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, within a year of taking office.
- The appointment of additional Federal Circuit Court judges to Brisbane and Parramatta; to appoint a permanent Federal Circuit Court judge to Wollongong; and to appoint an additional Family Court judge to Brisbane.
- \$43.2m over four years to avoid re-traumatisation of victims and survivors from being cross-examined by alleged perpetrators personally – and instead providing for both parties to be legally represented.
- A commitment to prohibit non-consensual sharing of private sexual images and recordings, within the first 100 days of a Shorten Labor government.
- A commitment to working within COAG to create specific offences prohibiting the covert installation of spying apps on smartphones.
\$3.6m for pilot programs in relation to family and domestic violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

- Protection for people on temporary visas facing family and domestic violence by creating a new type of temporary visa, which will remove impediments to women leaving their partners, and carry work rights so that women leaving violent relationships can seek to support themselves.
- Making domestic and family violence leave a universal workplace right, to further support those suffering family and domestic violence in our community, providing for five days' paid domestic and family violence leave in the national employment standards.

These measures are in addition to critical funding for frontline legal services, transitional housing options for women and children escaping family and domestic violence, and hosting a National Crisis Summit within our first 100 days of office.

Eliminating family and domestic violence requires a long term strategic approach by all levels of government and the Australian community.

I work to assist the Victorian Government, particularly in the lead up to the National Crisis Summit, to assess what further action can be taken federally to implement the Safety First in Family Law proposals.

I support the Victorian Labor Government's announcement to invest \$200,000 in 12 months' startup funding to help more local service providers and community groups prevent elder abuse.

If elected, I'll work with stakeholders to determine more areas where Labor can work to prevent elder abuse in the community.

I endorse the Change the Record Blueprint. Indigenous Australians are twice as likely to be in custody than in higher education.

A Shorten Labor government will deliver \$18.2m over three years to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS), reversing the Abbott-Turnbull government cuts so they can keep doing their work, and \$2.25m over three years to their national peak body to strengthen their representation.

A Labor government would also invest an additional \$100m to support Indigenous students and boost the number of Indigenous teachers in schools across Australia.

Elissa Sutherland, Greens

Thank you for your message and for the opportunity to address important questions about the work that the ECLC undertakes and the current funding shortfall.

Legal Centres cannot be run effectively in an environment of continual uncertainty around funding. It affects planning, staffing, morale and of course it affects the clients who are

seeking legal assistance. Clients usually have enough to worry about without finding themselves unable to secure representation at one of the most stressful times of their life.

Australia in the 1990s had a better funded legal aid system (which I understand is similar but separate to community legal advocacy). I did a series of summer clerkships in the 1990s and spent one of those in a major Legal Aid Centre in Northern Tasmania. I learnt a lot in that month, and particularly thinking about one client who sticks in my mind, I learnt that the effect on people's lives of being able to access legal representation and advice underpins human dignity in a democratic society. Without decently funded legal aid and assistance, we diminish and disempower an increasingly large section of the community. In a society where we value fair process and democracy, we need to have well-funded legal advocacy work for those who otherwise would not be able to afford it.

Federal funding for legal assistance has decreased significantly and add to that demand has increased. I am aware that domestic violence within our electorate of Casey is up by 230% and that over a third of your clients are involved in domestic disputes. That means you need more funding not funding cuts. We've seen State governments largely pick up the tab over time. This is not good enough.

I have spoken to people in the community and I am hearing that there is a real bottleneck to get legal assistance for combating domestic violence, tenancy issues and worker compensation. I have just read your Legal Needs Study and Proposal and it's clear that ECLC needs a commitment of continual and increased funding. We know that if your service did not provide timely legal advice to those who cannot afford it, their legal, social and economic position becomes more and more precarious and this, in the end, costs them their dignity and costs the legal, welfare and health systems a great deal more in the long-run. Legal services need to be a central part of the early intervention mix.

I am proud to be running for the Greens in the seat of Casey because I see that our party's plans and policies will tackle these big issues. In April, this year, Larissa Waters, MP and a former lawyer, launched the Greens plan to significantly improve funding for legal assistance across the nation. The Australian Greens' plan includes:

- Increasing legal aid funding by 50% in 2014-2015 to be maintained over the following three years;
- Doubling funding to Community Legal Centres in 2014-2015 to be maintained over the following three years;
- Doubling Indigenous Family Violence Prevention legal services funding in 2014-2015 and increasing other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services funding by 50% in 2014-2015 to be maintained over the following three years;
- Increasing funding to Indigenous legal assistance services including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) by 50%; and
- Addressing the impact of rising court fees by returning court fees to 2010-2011 levels.

More information about that plan can be found here: <http://greens.org.au/access-to-justice>

We also have a plan to significantly increase funding to support prevention and crisis services to tackle the increasing incidence of domestic violence in Casey and nationwide.

Our plan will:

- Create a new \$5 billion National Partnership Agreement on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women to specialist services such as crisis phone services, women's shelters, training for service providers, counselling, perpetrator interventions, and other specialist domestic violence services.
 - Roll out more effective perpetrator interventions including men's behaviour change programs and early intervention programs worth \$128 million over 4 years.
 - Fund a national peak body for specialist domestic violence services with \$8 million over 4 years.
 - Spend \$100 million over 2 years on crisis accommodation to make sure no-one is left without a place to stay.
 - Increase funding for legal assistance by at least \$200 million per year.
 - Support State and Territory governments to roll out specialist domestic violence courts with \$5 million over 2 years.
 - Make family law safe, with a \$60 million package to implement the *Safety First in Family Law* plan from Women's Legal Service Australia.
 - Support young people who are victims of violence.
 - Build long-term affordable housing to clear the bottleneck in the system, including immediate construction of 14,500 affordable dwellings funded by changes to negative gearing.
 - Provide 10 days of paid domestic violence leave as a right for every worker.
- More information about our funding for domestic violence services can be found here:

http://greens.org.au/sites/greens.org.au/files/20160526%20Confronting%20our%20DV%20crisis_final.pdf

<http://greens.org.au/domestic-violence>

The Greens have supported combating elder abuse and I draw your attention to the work that has been done combatting elder abuse by the Greens in the past and I believe we would support the proposals you put forward.

<http://greensmps.org.au/sites/default/files/caring-for-older-australians.pdf>

<http://www.tasgreensdeliver.com/elder-abuse-prevention-strategy-2/>

The Greens wholly support the recommendations of the Change the Record report to close the gap on imprisonment rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to close the gap on rates of violence experienced. Senator Siewert for the Greens in December of 2015 proposed a motion to the Senate to implement the finding of the Change the Record report and its Blueprint for change. More information on this can be found here:

<http://greens.org.au/news/wa/government-must-consider-change-record-report-and-close-gap-incarceration-and-violence>

I hope my response has addressed your questions and concerns. I welcome on-going communication as I need to be abreast of the concerns of our community and do my utmost to be a good representative of those concerns on the Federal Stage.

We are hearing a lot of people in our electorate say that they like what the Greens are planning and what we stand for but are worried that we have not budgeted for our policies

and they also worry that because we're a smaller party (but rapidly growing) that a vote for us is wasted.

First, all our policies and plans are fully costed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office; an office that the Greens advocated for in 2012. All our combined policies are revenue neutral. There are many savings to be made, not least of which is removing the subsidies for fossil fuels and the diesel fuel rebate. Removal of subsidies like these mean we can spend more on legal funding, schools, hospitals and so on.

Second, we believe the Greens will be playing a major role in governing this country within a decade (especially if we look at the shift in vote toward the Greens). We also offer voters an important alternative. A primary vote for us currently sends a very powerful message to one of the older parties who picks up our voters' preferences, that they want the bigger parties to soften and move to a more moderate position on so many issues, many of which the ECLC is clearly dealing with at the coalface. (Each of the older parties knows exactly where their preference votes come from).

Moreover, the Greens may hold the balance of power after this election. We have demonstrated that the role we play in that position is crucial for moving our country toward its roots of giving people a fair go and looking after the environment.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Elissa Sutherland

Tony Smith, Liberal

The Turnbull Coalition acknowledges the valuable contribution of community legal centres (CLCs) and we have made a substantial investment which recognises the vital work being done by the legal assistance sector.

The Coalition Government has committed \$1.6 billion over five years under a National Partnership Agreement on Legal Services Assistance with States and Territories and agreements with Indigenous legal assistance providers. The agreement which commenced on 1 July 2015, allocated funding to States and Territories following an evidence-based model and provided much-needed certainty to the legal assistance sector.

Apart from ceasing to fund Environment Defenders' Offices in 2013-14, there have been no cuts to community legal centre funding, or Indigenous legal assistance providers. Over the life of the National Partnership Agreement, legal aid funding will increase by \$12 million (or 6 per cent).

It is important to note that the Commonwealth Government is the primary funder of Indigenous legal assistance, despite more services being provided for State or Territory criminal matters.

As you would be aware, legal assistance funding is not a matter for the Commonwealth alone.

The Coalition is committed to improving the lives of all Australians and we will do what we can to increase funding levels for legal assistance in the tight fiscal environment. This has

been clearly evidenced by the restoration of \$25.5 million in legal assistance funding in March 2015 and allocating \$45 million (including \$30 million in the 2016-17 Budget) to frontline legal assistance services for victims of domestic violence. We will consult closely with States and Territories and the sector regarding the allocation of the \$30 million for frontline legal services.

Through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, the Commonwealth Government provides funding for a range of Indigenous specific activities to tackle the acknowledged drivers of crime and to reduce Indigenous people's contact with the criminal justice system. This includes support for prisoners to reintegrate into their communities, prevention and diversion for young people, restorative justice and mediation. State and Governments are critical partners to addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in the criminal justice system.

In contrast, Labor has made ad-hoc funding promises. Rather than enhance base funding to ensure long-term sustainability of the legal assistance sector, Labor created the funding cliff facing frontline legal services by committing \$6.8 million per year for 4 years to 30 June 2017.

Labor needs to provide greater transparency on how it plans to fund CLCs rather than revert to the chaotic and arbitrary funding approach they took when in Government.

Chisholm

Josh Fergeus, Greens

Thank you for your email. I apologise for the time it has taken me to respond - it's quite a detailed email and although I have worked in the not-for-profit sector for the last 12 years it's not personally my area of expertise.

I'm sure your familiar with our justice policy, which is available year round: <http://greens.org.au/policies/justice>

More specifically with regard to Community Legal Centres, our Parliamentary team have worked to support CLCs and the valuable work which you do:

<http://greens.org.au/magazine/tas-national/defending-community-legal-centres>

<http://greens.org.au/news/vic/community-legal-centres-miss-out-family-violence-package-say-greens-0>

As part of our policy platform on domestic violence, we have committed to increased funding for legal assistance by at least \$200 per year, including \$144 million over 4 years and secure long term funding for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services, and increased funding for CLCs, Legal Aid and ATSILS. Our full Access to Justice package will be announced in the coming weeks.

We're also looking to make family law safe, with a \$60 million package to implement the Safety First in Family Law plan from Women's Legal Services Australia, and to support State and Territory governments who chose to roll out specialist domestic violence courts with \$5 million over 2 years.

I have also directed your queries to Senator Nick McKim's office, as Nick holds the Attorney General profile for the Greens at a Federal level.

Best regards,

Josh Fergeus

Stefanie Perri, ALP

Thank you for your correspondence regarding Labor's plan to improve access to justice.

Labor acknowledges the vital work that the staff and volunteers of the Eastern Community Legal Centre do in providing legal assistance and community education in Victoria.

Labor believes that access to justice is a fundamental right of all Australians.

A Shorten Labor Government will invest around \$43 million in funding over three years from 1 July 2017 to frontline legal services so that they can continue doing their vital work.

This will mean that the Eastern Community Legal Centre will receive \$450,000 over three years under a Shorten Labor Government.

In government, Labor delivered a boost of \$30 million over two years for Legal Aid Commissions. The Liberals have cut \$24 million from Community Legal Centres, \$15 million from Legal Aid Commissions, and \$13 million from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services. That tells you all you need to know about the difference in priorities between Labor and the Liberals.

Legal Aid funding is a joint arrangement with the States and Territories. If elected, Labor would work with the States and Territories to negotiate appropriate funding arrangements.

As discussed above, a Shorten Labor Government will invest around \$43 million in funding over three years from 1 July 2017 to frontline legal services. Consistent with Labor's long-standing commitment to ensure access to justice for all Australians, Labor will ensure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) are able to carry out their vital role by committing approximately \$24 million to ATSILS over three years, including \$18.18 million to completely reverse the devastating funding shortfalls imposed by the Abbott-Turnbull Government.

One of the first policy announcements MADE by Bill Shorten as Leader of the Opposition was a commitment of over \$70 million to address family violence including an investment of almost \$50 million to frontline legal services.

As outlined below, a Shorten Labor Government will, within the first 100 days of forming Government, commission a National Crisis Summit that will include examining ways to better respond to the needs of survivors of family violence.

A Shorten Labor Government will, within the first 100 days of coming to Government, commission a National Crisis Summit that will specifically examine the range of ways to build capacity in this area including:

- Strengthening the way in which the legal system currently operates with respect to family violence, and any implications for legislative and administrative reform.
- Improving training arrangements for State and Federal magistrates and judges to better respond to and manage family law and family violence cases.
- Prioritising the safety of women and children in the court environment, including better court access and support facilities for families in the form of improved court security, child care and support for litigants navigating the system (through the courts and family mediation centres).
- Coordinating best practice approaches to the critical role performed by police in all jurisdictions in responding to family violence and providing immediate support for those affected.

A summit on family violence is required for the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to agree to urgently implement coordinated judicial and social services reform within their areas of responsibility to better deal with family violence and enable stakeholders, victims, survivors and their families to openly lay down the key policy challenges and priorities.

Labor has also made specific investments to increase capacity of legal services to ensure people experiencing family violence do not need to go to court alone including almost \$50 million for frontline legal services, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service.

We will also invest \$15 million in Safe at Home grants to help people affected by family violence stay safe in their own home and \$8 million in perpetrator mapping to look at the interactions across family violence, law enforcement, justice, child protection and related systems to help identify opportunities to prevent violence through information sharing. This package of over \$70 million in initial investments to address family violence was the first costed policy announcement made by Bill Shorten as Leader of the Opposition, highlighting how urgent and important this priority will be for a Shorten Labor Government.

Labor has also recently announced a commitment of \$65 million over six years to provide funding certainty to the organisations delivering the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2010-2022). This will ensure 1800 RESPECT, Our WATCh and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) can continue their critical work in responding to, preventing and understanding family violence.

This commitment will ensure that the funding goes directly to frontline services providers so those experiencing violence can speak directly to qualified professionals as quickly as possible. Labor will continue to consider further reforms to build capacity in the family law system in consultation with the Courts, police, legal services and families.

Labor understands the challenges presented by an ageing population. One of those challenges is the tragic issue of elder abuse. Labor agrees that this issue will require a range of strategies across many sectors to better respond to this increasing problem. A Shorten

Labor Government will appoint a Minister for Ageing and develop a National Strategy for an Ageing Australia. Labor believes that achieving an age-friendly Australia will require a whole-of-Government approach, under the direction of a dedicated Minister for Ageing.

A Shorten Labor Government will deliver a nationally coordinated approach to close the gap in Indigenous incarceration and victimisation rates. These rates have reached crisis point.

Labor will apply leadership and innovation to address the justice gap through community driven and national strategies that empower communities to address the complex causes of incarceration and crime. Labor's plan will involve:

- The first meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) convened under a Shorten Labor Government will consider priorities for justice targets to be included under the Closing the Gap framework to build safer communities and address levels of Indigenous incarceration.
- Establishing a Working Group of State, Territory and local government agencies, as well as key community organisations, to develop measurable targets that address rising incarceration rates and build safer communities.
- Establishing three new launch sites in a major city, regional town and remote community that build on existing community-led initiatives to explore the role of justice reinvestment in preventing crime and reducing incarceration.
- Resourcing a long-term study of the effectiveness of the justice reinvestment project currently underway in Bourke, New South Wales, to see what Australia can learn from this specific

As mentioned above, Labor will invest approximately \$24 million to ATSIILS over three years, including \$18.18 million to completely reverse the devastating funding shortfalls imposed by the Abbott-Turnbull Government.

Further details of our policies can be read at www.alp.org.au and www.100positivepolicies.org.au

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss these important issues.

Yours sincerely

Stefanie Perri
Labor Candidate for Chisholm

Julia Banks, Liberal

The Turnbull Coalition acknowledges the valuable contribution of community legal centres (CLCs) and we have made a substantial investment which recognises the vital work being done by the legal assistance sector.

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Apart from ceasing to fund Environment Defenders' Offices in 2013-14, there have been no cuts to community legal centre funding, or Indigenous legal assistance providers. Over the life of the National Partnership Agreement, legal aid funding will increase by \$12 million (or 6 per cent).

It is important to note that the Commonwealth Government is the primary funder of Indigenous legal assistance, despite more services being provided for State or Territory criminal matters.

As you would be aware, legal assistance funding is not a matter for the Commonwealth alone.

The Coalition is committed to improving the lives of all Australians and we will do what we can to increase funding levels for legal assistance in the tight fiscal environment. This has been clearly evidenced by the restoration of \$25.5 million in legal assistance funding in March 2015 and allocating \$45 million (including \$30 million in the 2016-17 Budget) to frontline legal assistance services for victims of domestic violence. We will consult closely with States and Territories and the sector regarding the allocation of the \$30 million for frontline legal services.

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In contrast, Labor has made ad-hoc funding promises. Rather than enhance base funding to ensure long-term sustainability of the legal assistance sector, Labor created the funding cliff facing frontline legal services by committing \$6.8 million per year for 4 years to 30 June 2017.

Labor needs to provide greater transparency on how it plans to fund CLCs rather than revert to the chaotic and arbitrary funding approach they took when in Government.

Deakin

Tony Clark, ALP

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Labor believes that access to justice is a fundamental right of all Australians.

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That tells you all you need to know about the difference in priorities between Labor and the Liberals.

Legal Aid funding is a joint arrangement with the States and Territories. If elected, Labor would work with the States and Territories to negotiate appropriate funding arrangements.

As discussed above, a Shorten Labor Government will invest around \$43 million in funding over three years from 1 July 2017 to frontline legal services.

Consistent with Labor's long-standing commitment to ensure access to justice for all Australians, Labor will ensure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) are able to carry out their vital role by committing approximately \$24 million to ATSILS over three years, including \$18.18 million to completely reverse the devastating funding shortfalls imposed by the Abbott-Turnbull Government.

One of the first policy announcements MADE by Bill Shorten as Leader of the Opposition was a commitment of over \$70 million to address family violence including an investment of almost \$50 million to frontline legal services.

As outlined below, a Shorten Labor Government will, within the first 100 days of forming Government, commission a National Crisis Summit that will include examining ways to better respond to the needs of survivors of family violence.

A Shorten Labor Government will, within the first 100 days of coming to Government, commission a National Crisis Summit that will specifically examine the range of ways to build capacity in this area including:

- Strengthening the way in which the legal system currently operates with respect to family violence, and any implications for legislative and administrative reform.
- Improving training arrangements for State and Federal magistrates and judges to better respond to and manage family law and family violence cases.
- Prioritising the safety of women and children in the court environment, including better court access and support facilities for families in the form of improved court security, child care and support for litigants navigating the system (through the courts and family mediation centres).
- Coordinating best practice approaches to the critical role performed by police in all jurisdictions in responding to family violence and providing immediate support for those affected.

A summit on family violence is required for the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to agree to urgently implement coordinated judicial and social services reform within their areas of responsibility to better deal with family violence and enable stakeholders, victims, survivors and their families to openly lay down the key policy challenges and priorities.

Labor has also made specific investments to increase capacity of legal services to ensure people experiencing family violence do not need to go to court alone including almost \$50 million for frontline legal services, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service.

We will also invest \$15 million in Safe at Home grants to help people affected by family violence stay safe in their own home and \$8 million in perpetrator mapping to look at the interactions across family violence, law enforcement, justice, child protection and related systems to help identify opportunities to prevent violence through information sharing.

This package of over \$70 million in initial investments to address family violence was the first costed policy announcement made by Bill Shorten as Leader of the Opposition, highlighting how urgent and important this priority will be for a Shorten Labor Government.

Labor has also recently announced a commitment of \$65 million over six years to provide funding certainty to the organisations delivering the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2010-2022). This will ensure 1800 RESPECT, Our WATCh and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) can continue their critical work in responding to, preventing and understanding family violence.

This commitment will ensure that the funding goes directly to frontline services providers so those experiencing violence can speak directly to qualified professionals as quickly as possible.

Labor will continue to consider further reforms to build capacity in the family law system in consultation with the Courts, police, legal services and families.

Labor understands the challenges presented by an ageing population. One of those challenges is the tragic issue of elder abuse.

Labor agrees that this issue will require a range of strategies across many sectors to better respond to this increasing problem.

A Shorten Labor Government will appoint a Minister for Ageing and develop a National Strategy for an Ageing Australia. Labor believes that achieving an age-friendly Australia will require a whole-of-Government approach, under the direction of a dedicated Minister for Ageing.

A Shorten Labor Government will deliver a nationally coordinated approach to close the gap in Indigenous incarceration and victimisation rates. These rates have reached crisis point.

Labor will apply leadership and innovation to address the justice gap through community driven and national strategies that empower communities to address the complex causes of incarceration and crime.

Labor's plan will include:

- the first meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) convened under a Shorten Labor Government will consider priorities for justice targets to be included under the Closing the Gap framework to build safer communities and address levels of Indigenous incarceration.
- Establish a Working Group of State, Territory and local government agencies, as well as key community organisations, to develop measurable targets that address rising incarceration rates and build safer communities.
- Establish three new launch sites in a major city, regional town and remote community that build on existing community-led initiatives to explore the role of justice reinvestment in preventing crime and reducing incarceration.
- Resource a long-term study of the effectiveness of the justice reinvestment project currently underway in Bourke, New South Wales, to see what Australia can learn from this specific initiative.
- Through COAG Labor will establish a national coordinating body to build the evidence base, collect data and measure progress as the new targets are implemented, and to monitor the effectiveness of justice reinvestment in the Australian context.

As mentioned above, Labor will invest approximately \$24 million to ATSIILS over three years, including \$18.18 million to completely reverse the devastating funding shortfalls imposed by the Abbott-Turnbull Government.

Further details of our policies can be read at www.alp.org.au and www.100positivepolicies.org.au

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss these important issues.

Michael Sukkar, Liberal

The Turnbull Coalition acknowledges the valuable contribution of community legal centres (CLCs) and we have made a substantial investment which recognises the vital work being done by the legal assistance sector.

The Coalition Government has committed \$1.6 billion over five years under a National Partnership Agreement on Legal Services Assistance with States and Territories and agreements with Indigenous legal assistance providers. The agreement which commenced on 1 July 2015, allocated funding to States and Territories following an evidence-based model and provided much-needed certainty to the legal assistance sector.

Apart from ceasing to fund Environment Defenders' Offices in 2013-14, there have been no cuts to community legal centre funding, or Indigenous legal assistance providers. Over the

life of the National Partnership Agreement, legal aid funding will increase by \$12 million (or 6 per cent).

It is important to note that the Commonwealth Government is the primary funder of Indigenous legal assistance, despite more services being provided for State or Territory criminal matters.

As you would be aware, legal assistance funding is not a matter for the Commonwealth alone.

The Coalition is committed to improving the lives of all Australians and we will do what we can to increase funding levels for legal assistance in the tight fiscal environment. This has been clearly evidenced by the restoration of \$25.5 million in legal assistance funding in March 2015 and allocating \$45 million (including \$30 million in the 2016-17 Budget) to frontline legal assistance services for victims of domestic violence. We will consult closely with States and Territories and the sector regarding the allocation of the \$30 million for frontline legal services.

Through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, the Commonwealth Government provides funding for a range of Indigenous specific activities to tackle the acknowledged drivers of crime and to reduce Indigenous people's contact with the criminal justice system. This includes support for prisoners to reintegrate into their communities, prevention and diversion for young people, restorative justice and mediation. State and Governments are critical partners to addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in the criminal justice system.

In contrast, Labor has made ad-hoc funding promises. Rather than enhance base funding to ensure long-term sustainability of the legal assistance sector, Labor created the funding cliff facing frontline legal services by committing \$6.8 million per year for 4 years to 30 June 2017.

Labor needs to provide greater transparency on how it plans to fund CLCs rather than revert to the chaotic and arbitrary funding approach they took when in Government.

Kooyong

Marg D'Arcy, ALP

Thank you for your correspondence regarding Labor's plan to improve access to justice.

Labor acknowledges the vital work that the staff and volunteers of the Eastern Community Legal Centre do in providing legal assistance and community education in Victoria.

Labor believes that access to justice is a fundamental right of all Australians.

A Shorten Labor Government will invest around \$43 million in funding over three years from 1 July 2017 to frontline legal services so that they can continue doing their vital work.

This will mean that the Eastern Community Legal Centre will receive \$450,000 over three years under a Shorten Labor Government.

In government, Labor delivered a boost of \$30 million over two years for Legal Aid Commissions.

The Liberals have cut \$24 million from Community Legal Centres, \$15 million from Legal Aid Commissions, and \$13 million from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services.

That tells you all you need to know about the difference in priorities between Labor and the Liberals.

Legal Aid funding is a joint arrangement with the States and Territories. If elected, Labor would work with the States and Territories to negotiate appropriate funding arrangements.

As discussed above, a Shorten Labor Government will invest around \$43 million in funding over three years from 1 July 2017 to frontline legal services.

Consistent with Labor's long-standing commitment to ensure access to justice for all Australians, Labor will ensure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) are able to carry out their vital role by committing approximately \$24 million to ATSILS over three years, including \$18.18 million to completely reverse the devastating funding shortfalls imposed by the Abbott-Turnbull Government.

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This package of over \$70 million in initial investments to address family violence was the first costed policy announcement made by Bill Shorten as Leader of the Opposition, highlighting how urgent and important this priority will be for a Shorten Labor Government.

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As mentioned above, Labor will invest approximately \$24 million to ATSIILS over three years, including \$18.18 million to completely reverse the devastating funding shortfalls imposed by the Abbott-Turnbull Government.

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Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss these important issues.

Dr Angelina Zubac, Independent

I agree that those who cannot easily access legal assistance should have access to free and/or low cost legal advice. Although I am unable to comment about specific amounts required to run your centre and to service the large geographic area you currently cover, I would be inclined to pursue as much funding as is possible on your organisation's behalf so that you can continue to do your good work. I am committed to making Australia as equal a society as possible and I do not think that is possible unless everyone is equal under the law but also have the ability to pursue their legal rights if transgressed. In addition, I have expertise in strategic management and I believe, with the help of equally qualified electors, we could suggest ways in which you could tweak your business model to extend your reach. For instance, there might be a template approach or an online service we could back or even an application to help you streamline workflows and give people useful information fast. There may be a case for a small nominal fee if funds remain constrained. However, I do believe that we are more able to help people if they do not have the stress of legal fees.

As you might appreciate, as an independent candidate with a "day job" I can only be so aware of the extent to which community assistance organisations such as ECLC have had

funding cut. As per my answer in question 1, I would be committed to making sure you can assist as many people as it is possible in your areas of focus. Should I manage to do what would seem to be quite impossible statistically at this point in time – win Kooyong despite it being Conservative for 100 years, I would do all I can to reverse these costs but also make sure you are able to use modern technology and other means to extend your reach, improve your business model overall.

I am very much aware of the problem of family violence. I am committed to ensuring that the problem of family violence continues to be debated and communicated. Although increased funding or reversing funding cuts will not solve all family violence related problems, this would certainly help. Again, I think it could be useful to think about how we can also use modern technology to extend service availability. I do believe there are concerted efforts in play to try to ensure better coordination between various organisations, etc. I would certainly do all I could should I get voted in to make sure better coordination occurs and this involves coordination across specific programs.

I am very much aware of the tenuous situation many women (almost entirely women) find themselves in when they are trying to end a relationship but violence and threats of violence and acts designed to push the boundaries of the law or break the law persist. Certainly education is very important. This includes education of those in the legal profession but also in enforcement. I believe police are better educated than ever before but more needs to be done. I would be inclined to encourage the development of a specialist police force. My understanding is that specialist police are better at identifying and stopping situations escalating. It seems to me that more has to be done to ensure that people get help at “critical points in time.” We are getting better and better at understanding how very difficult situations can be resolved and negotiated using best practice negotiation techniques. Of course, I am also aware of the fact that sometimes negotiation does not work and that is when you need to have police who can identify when a line has been crossed. By the same token, although like most women I am aware of how some people (mostly men) will behave extremely badly when they do not get their way and the only way of redressing this is to enforce very tough penalties or to detain someone. I gather that the five points you cite as proposals are expected to be underpinned by specific programs. I support the development of such programs as anyone aware of the problem of domestic violence would be inclined to do. I appreciate people with expertise will be able to further advise.

One of my platforms for the national is “Peace of Mind at Every Age” and the local priority for me in the next 12 months is “Peace of Mind in Retirement”. I am very aware of the fact that at different stages of our lives we all have different issues to resolve in order to live happy lives. I am also aware of the fact that although most people look after their ages parents, grandparents, etc. there are many who do not do so or if they do it involves physical, emotional and financial abuse. I am keen to establish and promote organisations, including businesses that are focussed on providing services to the elderly so that they can stay in their homes for as long as possible and have peace of mind until the end of their days. At the periphery, it is clear that some people need to have access to advocates who will help them when they cannot get help from family or that help translates into a form of abuse. I would do my best to help such programs be developed and appropriately funded where necessary.

Living in Kooyong you might have noticed that there are not a lot of aboriginal or Torres Straits Islanders. However, my mother before she moved to Tweed Heads South lived in

Lethbridge Park, which is near Mount Druitt and that had a totally different demographic. It had many families living in that area quite peacefully and productively but also many people and families who are still living on the margins, many from the Aboriginal and Torres Islander communities. On that basis, including on the basis that I work in the university sector which has been fairly progressive about ensuring people from all backgrounds can get an education, I think I can confidently say it is fairly obvious that a lot will need to be done to make sure people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait backgrounds have more equal lives. I am aware of the fact that the problems they face are diverse and that women from those communities have it very tough, that they face extreme prejudice so it would not be easy for them to slot into mainstream society even if they could do things like get themselves a good job or a university place. In addition to what I propose above, I would be inclined to be guided by those who know better than me and support the implementation of a wide diversity of programs. I do not believe a blanket approach is possible but that high levels of customised, specific and/or specialist programs are required to make it possible for people from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait backgrounds to be able to have the same opportunities as everyone else.

Thank you for the opportunity to learn about your organisation and what it seeks from an elected official. I will do my best to win Kooyong so that I can fight for the things that need to be fought for on behalf of electors. I sincerely hope you are able to continue with your good work. Do feel free to contact me again if you need to do so or would appreciate further clarification.

Kind regards,
Dr Angelina Zubac

Josh Frydenberg, Liberal

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Apart from ceasing to fund Environment Defenders' Offices in 2013-14, there have been no cuts to community legal centre funding, or Indigenous legal assistance providers. Over the life of the National Partnership Agreement, legal aid funding will increase by \$12 million (or 6 per cent).

It is important to note that the Commonwealth Government is the primary funder of Indigenous legal assistance, despite more services being provided for State or Territory criminal matters.

As you would be aware, legal assistance funding is not a matter for the Commonwealth alone.

The Coalition is committed to improving the lives of all Australians and we will do what we can to increase funding levels for legal assistance in the tight fiscal environment. This has been clearly evidenced by the restoration of \$25.5 million in legal assistance funding in March 2015 and allocating \$45 million (including \$30 million in the 2016-17 Budget) to frontline legal assistance services for victims of domestic violence. We will consult closely with States and Territories and the sector regarding the allocation of the \$30 million for frontline legal services.

Through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, the Commonwealth Government provides funding for a range of Indigenous specific activities to tackle the acknowledged drivers of crime and to reduce Indigenous people's contact with the criminal justice system. This includes support for prisoners to reintegrate into their communities, prevention and diversion for young people, restorative justice and mediation. State and Governments are critical partners to addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in the criminal justice system.

In contrast, Labor has made ad-hoc funding promises. Rather than enhance base funding to ensure long-term sustainability of the legal assistance sector, Labor created the funding cliff facing frontline legal services by committing \$6.8 million per year for 4 years to 30 June 2017.

Labor needs to provide greater transparency on how it plans to fund CLCs rather than revert to the chaotic and arbitrary funding approach they took when in Government.

La Trobe

Simon Curtis, ALP

Thank you for your correspondence regarding Labor's plan to improve access to justice.

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In government, Labor delivered a boost of \$30 million over two years for Legal Aid Commissions. The Liberals have cut \$24 million from Community Legal Centres, \$15 million from Legal Aid Commissions, and \$13 million from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services. That tells you all you need to know about the difference in priorities between Labor and the Liberals.

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As discussed above, a Shorten Labor Government will invest around \$43 million in funding over three years from 1 July 2017 to frontline legal services. Consistent with Labor's long-standing commitment to ensure access to justice for all Australians, Labor will ensure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) are able to carry out their vital role by committing approximately \$24 million to ATSILS over three years, including \$18.18 million to completely reverse the devastating funding shortfalls imposed by the Abbott-Turnbull Government.

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Labor understands the challenges presented by an ageing population. One of those challenges is the tragic issue of elder abuse. Labor agrees that this issue will require a range of strategies across many sectors to better respond to this increasing problem. A Shorten Labor Government will appoint a Minister for Ageing and develop a National Strategy for an Ageing Australia. Labor believes that achieving an age--friendly Australia will require a whole-of-Government approach, under the direction of a dedicated Minister for Ageing.

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Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss these important issues.

Jason Wood, Liberal

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It is important to note that the Commonwealth Government is the primary funder of Indigenous legal assistance, despite more services being provided for State or Territory criminal matters.

As you would be aware, legal assistance funding is not a matter for the Commonwealth alone.

The Coalition is committed to improving the lives of all Australians and we will do what we can to increase funding levels for legal assistance in the tight fiscal environment. This has been clearly evidenced by the restoration of \$25.5 million in legal assistance funding in March 2015 and allocating \$45 million (including \$30 million in the 2016-17 Budget) to frontline legal assistance services for victims of domestic violence. We will consult closely with States and Territories and the sector regarding the allocation of the \$30 million for frontline legal services.

Through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, the Commonwealth Government provides funding for a range of Indigenous specific activities to tackle the acknowledged drivers of crime and to reduce Indigenous people's contact with the criminal justice system. This includes support for prisoners to reintegrate into their communities, prevention and diversion for young people, restorative justice and mediation. State and Governments are critical partners to addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in the criminal justice system.

In contrast, Labor has made ad-hoc funding promises. Rather than enhance base funding to ensure long-term sustainability of the legal assistance sector, Labor created the funding cliff facing frontline legal services by committing \$6.8 million per year for 4 years to 30 June 2017.

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Menzies

Kevin Andrews, Liberal

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Attorney General

Nick McKim, Greens spokesperson for legal affairs

Thank you for your email of the 16th June 2016 seeking the Australian Greens views on access to justice funding.

The Greens are absolutely committed to adequate funding for the community legal sector, Legal Aid, and the court system. We recently launched a comprehensive access to justice plan to restore the Liberal Government's cuts and invest \$761m in community legal services and aid. A full copy of the plan can be found [here](#).

Over the forward estimates, the Greens will invest \$92m in Community Legal Centres and \$290.04m for Legal Aid Commissions around the country. Access to justice is a fundamental human right and Legal Aid and Community Legal Centres provide much needed support and legal advice to people who would otherwise be on their own. We believe that investment into legal services actually saves the community money. Underinvestment merely shifts costs to other areas of government like health, housing and child protection.

The Greens agree with the Productivity Commission that partial restoration of the cuts made by the Abbott-Turnbull government, or even full restoration of these cuts, isn't enough: legal assistance in Australia is chronically underfunded, and only The Greens believe in social justice enough to provide the funding it so badly requires, so that all Australians have access to justice.

The Greens will reverse the government's cruel cuts to legal assistance, as well as fund the Productivity Commission's recommendations for extra funding.

This will mean additional federal funding across the forward estimates of:

- \$92m for Community Legal Centres
- \$290.04m for Legal Aid Commissions
- \$183.09m for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services
- \$144.36m for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services
- \$6.99m for legal service peak bodies.

That's an extra \$716 million of federal funding across four years for these essential legal services that allow our most disadvantaged and vulnerable citizens to access to justice. This includes \$6.99m across the forward estimates for peak bodies to continue their vital role in things such as advocacy, accreditation and policy development for their members, with the following allocations:

- \$4.5m for National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services
- \$1.67m for National Association of Community Legal Centres

- \$0.82m for National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Services.

With States and Territories matching the Productivity Commission's recommendations for extra legal assistance funding, split 40:60 with the Commonwealth, there will be a further \$320m in funding.

Violence against women is preventable, and gender equality is the core of the solution, along with funding our vital front line services. An Australia free from violence against women and their children is an Australia where women are safe, respected, valued and treated as equals in private and public life.

The best way to stop violence is before it occurs. Primary prevention involves challenging the deeply ingrained attitudes, social norms and gender inequalities that give rise to men's violence against women. The Greens support the *Change the Story* framework for primary prevention developed by Our Watch.

Gender inequality is the root cause of violence against women, and acknowledging this is the first step to truly eliminating it. The key objectives of the *Change the Story* framework are:

- Challenge condoning of violence against women
- Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships
- Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles
- Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys.
- Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

The Greens would commit to a broad program for gender equality led by the federal government, but involving everyone across government, business, civil society and the community.

Our Watch (the National Foundation for the Prevention of Violence Against Women) and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety – or ANROWS – are our primary prevention and cultural change experts. The Greens support securing and expanding their funding.

The Greens support a national rollout of best practice, age-appropriate Respectful Relationships programs alongside age appropriate sexual education in our schools, by working with States and Territory governments. This would be supported by federal investment of \$10 million over 4 years in quality assurance, safety, evaluation and coordination.

It is critical to ensure there are qualified practitioners with expertise in best practice approaches to primary prevention, who can not only advise government, but also lead local prevention activities - funded at \$18 million over 6 years.

Our full Eliminating gender inequality policy initiative can be found [here](#).

The Greens support the 5-step Safety First in Family Law plan from Women's Legal Services Australia in its entirety. We will put safety first in family law with a \$60 million package involving the following reforms:

- Create a special process in family courts for domestic violence cases, supported by specialist workers placed in court registries along with specialist services based in courts to receive referrals. These workers and services would focus on early intervention and risk assessment - \$5 million per year over 4 years.

- Reform the Family Law Act with a focus on safety and child protection. This would include removing the language of “equal shared time” and “equal shared responsibility” to focus on safety and risk to children. It would also include legal protections to stop a victim being directly cross-examined by their abuser.
- Make family law safe for everyone by implementing the Family Law Council’s 2012 recommendations on improving the system for clients from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds, and by undertaking a comprehensive audit of barriers facing women with disabilities and women from regional communities and women in prison.
- Provide legally assisted and supported family dispute resolution in domestic violence cases based on the highly effective 2012 Co-ordinated Family Dispute Resolution pilot. The Greens would commit \$10 million per year over 4 years to roll out this model at 10 sites around Australia, aiming for a national rollout as soon as possible.
- Support women to financially recover from violence by streamlining small property settlements and simplifying family court processes.
- Establish robust national accreditation and monitoring for family report writers with mandatory training on domestic violence, cultural competency and working with victims of trauma for all practitioners who prepare family reports.
- Implement mandatory video recording of interviews with family report writers to bring the Family Court into line with standard practice in other jurisdictions such as workers compensation and investigations of child sexual abuse. This measure is additional to the Safety First in Family Law plan.
- Deliver a comprehensive professional development package for family law judicial officers, and family law legal professionals, working with the Judicial College of Australia, the Australian Institute of Family Studies, State and Territory law institutes and bar associations.

The Australian Greens stand against all forms of elder abuse. We believe that older people have the equal right to participate in society, and to maintain their independence.

The Greens have announced a number of initiatives to support older Australians including giving greater choice and control over the care they receive, this will give older Australians greater flexibility and control. This can help reduce vulnerability to elder abuse.

<http://greens.org.au/olderaustralians>

We have also announced a significant commitment to increase funding for legal services. As part of our *Access to Justice* policy commitment, we have announced an extra \$92m in funding for Community Legal Centres, as part of a total \$716m in total funding for essential legal services. This will ensure that older Australians can have fair access to justice -

<http://greens.org.au/access-to-justice>

We have also announced a significant funding boost to community services. As part of our inequality package, we have committed to working towards guaranteed access to essential community services. Everyone deserves access to essential community services, and these shouldn’t depend on where people live, or the uncertainty of short term government contracts. As part of our plan to tackle inequality and poverty, the Greens will boost funding for community services by \$504m over the next four years - <http://greens.org.au/inequality>

The Greens support approaches that empower and invest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to create community driven solutions. Twenty-five years after the final report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, there are still too many Aboriginal people incarcerated, and dying in prison.

To see meaningful change, the Greens will adopt Change the Record campaign recommendations, including:

- Setting a national target to reduce incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Developing a national, whole of government strategy to address incarceration rates.
- Undertaking an independent review of laws and policies which contribute to unequal incarceration rates, working to fix the problems in the system.
- The Greens will provide \$40 million in grant funding for projects to help reduce the rate of incarceration.

Nick McKim
Australian Greens Senator for Tasmania