

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Relief as Community Legal Centre funding cuts reversed in pre-budget announcement

Eastern Community Legal Centre is delighted and relieved by today's announcement of the reversal of planned funding cuts that were to impact the Centre, particularly its services [in the Yarra Ranges](#). Attorney-General Senator George Brandis and Minister for Women Senator Michaela Cash announced the funding at a media conference this morning.

ECLC CEO Michael Smith expressed gratitude for the restored funding and appreciation for the broad and sustained support from the local communities.

"While we await details, it appears that the \$240,000 (per annum) funding will be restored and the Centre can now focus on delivering and developing its high quality free legal help to people and communities most in need. It is especially important for our Yarra Ranges Centre, where the cuts seriously threatened its viability and those communities were really fearful of that." Mr Smith said.

"This is a huge relief, not just for ECLC's Board, staff and volunteers, but more importantly for the many clients we assist every day facing major legal issues related to family violence, health or housing concerns and who cannot afford a private lawyer. Our clients and their community have spoken out directly about their desperate need for these services and the government has clearly listened."

The Centre acknowledges the extensive support it has received from across its vast catchment from community agencies, elected representatives and the broader community. "The support from Yarra Ranges Council and indeed all of the six local councils in our region has been magnificent and highlighted the impact these cuts would have on each of their distinct communities.

"We particularly wish to acknowledge the active engagement of local MPs Tony Smith and Jason Wood who have been strong supporters of the Centre over an extended period. The advocacy of state and federal MPs from across the political spectrum was also important and played a vital role in achieving this outcome.

"Every day, ECLC is working for people from communities experiencing high levels of vulnerability and disadvantage. We are very pleased that this has been recognised and that this work can now continue." Mr Smith concluded.

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For further media information and interviews, please contact:

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