

17 May 2013

Ms. Rashida Manjoo
United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women
Sent via email to vaw@ohchr.org

Dear Ms Manjoo,

Urgent appeal to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women on the introduction of the Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 in New South Wales, Australia.

1. This urgent appeal is respectfully submitted to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the introduction of the Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW). In the view of the signatories to this letter, the Bill violates a number of core human rights principles, including: the right to equality and non-discrimination under Article 2 of the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women* ('CEDAW') as well as Australia's due diligence obligations under that treaty; and the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health under article 12 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* ('ICESCR'). The Bill also runs counter to the Special Rapporteur's own recommendations on reparations for women who have been subjected to violence,¹ and the United Nations *Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power*² ('Basic Principles').
2. For information about the signatories to this urgent appeal, please see Appendix A. For a copy of the Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 see Appendix B.

Victims Compensation in New South Wales, Australia

3. All Australian States and Territories currently have individual schemes to compensate victims of crime. New South Wales ('NSW') first established a Victims Compensation Scheme in 1987. Since that time, the Scheme has been amended a number of times, including to increase the funding and compensatory measures available to victims of crime. The Government has also passed legislation for a 'Victim's Charter of Rights' which, *inter alia*, guarantees that 'victim(s) will be treated with courtesy, compassion, cultural sensitivity and respect for the victim's right and dignity'³.

¹ Human Rights Council, Fourteenth Session, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo*, 23 April 2010, U.N Doc. A/HRC/14/22.

² U.N General Assembly, *Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power*, 29 November 1985, U.N Doc. A/RES/40/34.

³ *Victims Rights Act 1996* (NSW) Charter of Victims Rights, Article 1.

4. On 11 August 2011 the NSW Attorney General announced an independent assessment of the Victim's Compensation Scheme with 'a view to delivering faster and more effective financial support to victims of violent crime'.⁴ PricewaterhouseCoopers were appointed to undertake the review and released an Issues Paper in March 2012.⁵ There was a 6-week period to make public submissions, closing in May 2012. PricewaterhouseCoopers presented its report ('*Victims Compensation Review Report*') to the NSW Government in July 2012.
5. Throughout 2012 there were significant delays in listing victims compensation matters for determination through Victims Services NSW. By June 2012 it was taking an average of 31 months from the timing of lodging a victims compensation claim to the point of final determination.⁶
6. On 25 September 2012, 80 leading legal, human rights, health, community and women's organisations wrote to the NSW Attorney General expressing concerns about any proposed changes to the victims compensation scheme and calling for extensive public consultation before any legislative changes occurred, including the release of a Discussion Paper, followed by public consultation on Exposure Draft Legislation.⁷
7. On 7 May 2013, the NSW Government introduced the Victims Rights and Support Bill, which abolishes the existing scheme for Compensation, replacing it with a new 'Support Scheme'.⁸ The primary features of the Bill of immediate concern to the signatories to this letter are:
 - a. That the Bill operates retrospectively, in that it purports to apply to claimants who have already lodged applications for compensation under the existing scheme.⁹ For some claimants this may mean that despite waiting years for their claim to be determined, due to the new upper time limits introduced by the Bill, they may receive nothing.
 - b. The previous Schedule of Injuries that determined rates of compensation will be removed and replaced with new categories of 'recognition payments'.¹⁰ These awards are significantly less in monetary terms than those under the existing scheme, and are tied to types of criminal acts rather than injuries suffered by the victim. The old scheme included a domestic violence injury and psychological or psychiatric injury. There is no recognition payment for psychological harm under the new scheme.
 - c. Additional Financial Assistance, which is available for economic loss, favours claimants that are employed and can demonstrate loss of actual earnings as a result of the criminal act committed against them.¹¹ This will have a gendered impact because where victims have sustained a serious psychological injury, for example, through domestic violence, child abuse

⁴ NSW Attorney General, 'NSW Government to speed up victims of crime payments', *Media Release*, 11 August 2011 accessed on 16 May 2013 at:

http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/Lawlink/Corporate/ll_corporate.nsf/pages/LL_Homepage_lawlink_news_archive_2011#speed_p_av

⁵ PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Issues Paper: Review of NSW Victim's Compensation Scheme*, 22 March 2012 accessed on 16 May 2013 at: [http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/victimsservices/ll_vs.nsf/vwFiles/IssuesPaper-VicsCompReview.pdf/\\$file/IssuesPaper-VicsCompReview.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/victimsservices/ll_vs.nsf/vwFiles/IssuesPaper-VicsCompReview.pdf/$file/IssuesPaper-VicsCompReview.pdf).

⁶ Victims Compensation Tribunal – Chairperson's Report 2011/2012, Victims Services, Department of Attorney General and Justice, Sydney at page 19 accessed on 17 May 2013 at: [http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/victimsservices/ll_vs.nsf/vwFiles/Chairpersons_2011-12.pdf/\\$file/Chairpersons_2011-12.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/victimsservices/ll_vs.nsf/vwFiles/Chairpersons_2011-12.pdf/$file/Chairpersons_2011-12.pdf)

⁷ Open letter to the NSW Attorney General, 25 September 2012 accessed on 17 May 2013 at: <http://www.womenslegalnsw.asn.au/downloads/VC-Open-Ltr-250912.doc>

⁸ Victims Rights and Support Bill, Second Reading Speech, Mr Brad Hazzard, Wakehurst- Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure, 7 May 2013.

⁹ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW) Schedule 2, Clause 5(1).

¹⁰ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW) Part 4 Division 5.

¹¹ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW) Schedule 4, Part 3.

or sexual assault, their capacity to work may have been diminished so they are less likely to be employed full-time, if at all.

- d. Victims of violence will be required to have reported the act of violence to police or a 'Government agency' in order to be eligible for financial assistance for economic loss or a recognition payment.¹²
- e. Victims of domestic violence, child abuse or sexual assault will be required to lodge complaints within ten years of the relevant act of violence to be eligible for a recognition payment, or, where the victim is a child, within 10 years from them attaining 18 years of age.¹³

8. The Bill is scheduled to be debated in the Sitting Week beginning 20 May 2013, and, if it garners sufficient support, could pass imminently into law.

Human Rights Violations

9. The proposed changes to Victims Compensation legislation violate the human rights standards outlined below.

10. **Article 2 of CEDAW** enshrines the principle of non-discrimination and substantive realisation of equality between women and men, including under the law. By creating a hierarchy of crimes to determine levels of compensation for victims rather than focusing on injuries suffered, the Bill will have the effect of significantly reducing compensation available to victims of gendered crimes such as child abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence, compared with the relatively higher levels of compensation available for 'gender neutral' crimes such as homicide and assault occasioning grievous bodily harm.¹⁴ We submit that the proposed requirement that victims report the crime to a 'Government agency' will also prove to be a hurdle for claimants who are victims of gendered crime, given the manifold social and cultural barriers that women may face when deciding whether to report such crimes.¹⁵ As the previous Special Rapporteur has noted, the requirement of non-discrimination prohibits States from enacting legislation that results in discriminatory outcomes as between men and women, and 'implies that States are required to use the same level of commitment in relation to prevention, investigation, punishment and provision of remedies for violence against women as they do with regard to other forms of violence.'¹⁶

11. The reduction of payments to domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse victims also runs counter to Australia's due diligence obligations under CEDAW. Under the old NSW victims compensation scheme the maximum payment for a victim of domestic violence who could prove a serious psychological or psychiatric disorder (psychological or psychiatric disorder – category 2) was \$50,000.¹⁷ Similarly, the maximum payment for sexual assault was also \$50,000.¹⁸ These payments

¹² Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW) Part 4, Division 6, Cl 39(2)(b).

¹³ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW) Part 4, Division 6, Cl 40(5).

¹⁴ Over the past 10 years, claimants for compensation for sexual assault have been 80% female; claimants for domestic violence have been 90% female. In contrast, claimants for assault have been 30% female, while all other categories have had approximately equal splits in terms of male and female claimants: PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Issues Paper: Review of NSW Victim's Compensation Scheme*, 22 March 2012 accessed on 16 May 2013 at: [http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/victimsservices/ll_vs.nsf/vwFiles/IssuesPaper-VicsCompReview.pdf/\\$file/IssuesPaper-VicsCompReview.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/victimsservices/ll_vs.nsf/vwFiles/IssuesPaper-VicsCompReview.pdf/$file/IssuesPaper-VicsCompReview.pdf), p 22.

¹⁵ For examples of these barriers, see Human Rights Council, Fourteenth Session, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences*, Rashida Manjoo, 23 April 2010, U.N Doc. A/HRC/14/22 [44].

¹⁶ *The Due Diligence Standard as a tool for the elimination of violence against women*, (2006) U.N Doc. E/CN.4/2006/61 [35].

¹⁷ Victims Support and Rehabilitation Act 1996 (NSW), Schedule 1.

¹⁸ Victims Support and Rehabilitation Act 1996 (NSW), Schedule 1.

recognised the serious harm caused by domestic violence and sexual assault. In the experience of the signatories to this letter, many victims who have suffered domestic violence, sexual assault, or in some cases, both, are diagnosed with severe depression, severe anxiety and/or post-traumatic stress disorder. The omission of a recognition payment for psychological harm ignores these factors and wrongly equates domestic violence with discrete physical incidents.¹⁹ Under the Bill, domestic violence is recognised as either an assault (\$1,500)²⁰ or assault resulting in grievous bodily harm (\$5,000).²¹ A sexual assault claim which previously was awarded up to \$50,000 will receive a recognition payment of \$10,000.²²

12. Failing to recognise that domestic violence is more than physical abuse runs counter to the jurisprudence of Human Rights treaty bodies. The Committee Against Torture has recognised violence against women as a form of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.²³ Of the 16 states reviewed by the Committee Against Torture in 2011-2012, 15 received recommendations related to addressing domestic violence,²⁴ highlighting that domestic violence falls within the remit of the *Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, to which Australia is a signatory.
13. There are other forms of financial payments available to victims who apply within 2 years of the relevant act of violence (or 2 years from when a child turn 18 years old) which will likely be out of the reach of victims of domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assault.²⁵ These include up to \$5,000 of financial assistance for immediate needs²⁶ and up to \$30,000 for financial assistance for economic loss.²⁷ The latter includes up to \$20,000 if the victim can demonstrate loss of actual earnings²⁸ or if the victim cannot demonstrate loss of actual earnings, up to \$5,000 for out-of-pocket expenses.²⁹ Other forms of economic loss include medical and dental expenses;³⁰ up to \$5,000 for expenses associated with criminal or coronial proceedings relating to the act of violence;³¹ and up to \$1,500 for expenses incurred through loss of, or damage to, clothing or personal affects worn or carried by the victim at the time of the act.³² We are concerned that even those victims of domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assault who are not otherwise excluded from these payments due to time limits may not have the necessary receipts or documentation to substantiate their claim,³³ leaving them with nothing more than a modest recognition payment.

¹⁹ CEDAW Committee, *General Recommendation No 19: Violence against Women*, UN Doc A/47/38 (1992) at paragraph 6; Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 (NSW) section 9(3)(d).

²⁰ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW), Part 4, Division 5, Cl 35(4)(d).

²¹ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW), Part 4, Division 5, Cl 35(3)(c).

²² Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW), Part 4, Division 5, Cl 35(2).

²³ Committee Against Torture, *General Comment No 2 regarding the implementation of article 2 by States parties*, CAT/C/GC/2, 24 January 2008 at paragraph 18.

²⁴ Report of the Committee Against Torture, 47th – 48th sessions, Belarus - CAT/C/BLR/CO/7 [Para 22], Bulgaria - CAT/C/BGR/CO/4-5 [Para 25], Djibouti - CAT/C/DJI/CO/1 [Para 21] Germany - CAT/C/DEU/CO/5 [Para 33], Madagascar - CAT/C/MDG/CO/1 [Pars 13, 18], Morocco - CAT/C/MAR/CO/4 (Para 23), Paraguay - CAT/C/PRY/CO/4-6 [Para 21], Sri Lanka - CAT/C/LKA/CO/3-4 [Para 22], Albania CAT/C/ALB/CO/2 [Pars 14, 28], Armenia - CAT/C/ARM/CO/3 [Para 18], Canada - CAT/C/CAN/CO/6 - [Para 23], Cuba - CAT/C/CUB/CO/2 [Para 26], Czech Republic CAT/C/CZE/CO/4-5 [Pars 13, 23], Greece - CAT/C/RWA/CO/1 [Para 23], Rwanda - CAT/C/RWA/CO/1 [Para 16].

²⁵ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW), Part 4, Division 6, Cl 40.

²⁶ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW), Schedule 4, Part 3, Cl 8(1); Cl 10(1).

²⁷ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW), Schedule 4, Part 3, Cl 8 (2), Cl 9.

²⁸ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW), Schedule 4, Part 3, Cl 8 (2)(a), Cl 9(a).

²⁹ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW), Schedule 4, Part 3, Cl 8 (2)(b), Cl 9(b).

³⁰ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW), Schedule 4, Part 3, Cl 8 (2)(c), Cl 9(c).

³¹ Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW), Schedule 4, Part 3, Cl 8 (2)(d), Cl 9(d).

³² Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013 (NSW), Schedule 4, Part 3, Cl 8 (2)(e), Cl 9(e).

³³ This may be due of the passage of time, or because of the nature of the injury may make it especially difficult to collect and keep such documentation.

14. The requirement of due diligence implies that beneficial measures enacted by States, such as Victims Compensation legislation, cannot be wound back, because due diligence entails 'taking *positive steps* and measures by States to ensure that women's human rights are protected, respected, promoted and fulfilled'³⁴ (emphasis added). It is further worth noting that both the downgrading of compensation levels for crimes such as domestic violence, and the failure to deal with existing claims for Victims Compensation under the comparatively more generous existing scheme both fall foul of the due diligence standard, which, in access to justice measures provides 'a requirement to treat women victims and their relatives with respect and dignity throughout the legal process'.³⁵
15. **Article 12 of ICESCR** guarantees the right of everyone to 'the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health', and, as a signatory to ICESCR, Australia is bound to the progressive realisation of this right, entailing that retrograde steps leading to the diminution of charter rights are not acceptable.³⁶ The proposed new scheme is already causing additional trauma to claimants, particularly victims of domestic violence, child abuse or sexual assault. Many victims applied for compensation more than 12 months ago, while some applied 3 or 4 years ago. A significant number of these victims have relived their experience through a psychological assessment with an Authorised Report Writer, a required step for some applications under the current scheme that is likely to be of little or no value under the proposed scheme. The NSW Government has given rise to a legitimate expectation that existing Victims Compensation claims will be determined on the same basis on which they were initiated. The Government commissioned report, the *Victims Compensation Review Report*, acknowledged that 'it would be unfair to change these goalposts mid-way'.³⁷ The Government therefore has a concomitant responsibility not to take steps that involve retraumatising these victims further by reducing or removing their compensation payments.
16. **The Special Rapporteur's Recommendations on Reparations for Women Subject to Violence** codify important principles in relation to time limits for reparations for women. Once the Bill is assented to the 10 year upper time limit will apply from the date of its introduction (7 May 2013). This appears to have the effect of excluding victims who have already lodged a claim for compensation from receiving an award if they have lodged outside the 10-year limit. This will occur even if the delays were due to factors outside their control, such as requirements for criminal proceedings to be finalised before proceeding with victims compensation claims.
17. We submit that an absolute upper time limit of 10 years from the relevant act of violence or 10 years after turning 18 years if the relevant act of violence happened as a child is arbitrary, contrary to best practice, and will deny many victims of serious crimes a human right remedy. There are many reasons why victims of domestic violence or crimes of a sexual nature may delay reporting, with research undertaken in Australia in relation to the Anglican Church finding that there are frequently long delays in reporting child sexual abuse, with an average delay of 23 years.³⁸ As the Special Rapporteur has noted '(t)he question of timing is also important in determining women's access to reparations, especially for crimes of a sexual nature...(n)arrow applications deadlines or a closed-list system may

³⁴ *The Due Diligence Standard as a tool for the elimination of violence against women* (2006) U.N Doc. E/CN.4/2006/61 para [36].

³⁵ Statement by Ms. Rashida Manjoo, Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences, Statement made at the Commission on the Status of Women, Fifty-Seventh session, New York, 4 March 2013, p 3.

³⁶ ICESCR, Article 2.

³⁷ PricewaterhouseCoopers, *NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice Review of the Victims Compensation Fund*, 12 July 2012 at 51.

³⁸ Patrick Parkinson, Kim Oates and Amanda Jayakody, *Study of Reported Child Sexual Abuse in the Anglican Church*, May 2009, available at <http://www.anglican.org.au/docs/Study%20of%20Reported%20Child%20Sexual%20Abuse%20in%20the%20Anglican%20Church%20May%202009%20Full%20Report.pdf>, at 5.

not allow different victims to come forward and claim reparations when they feel physically and psychologically prepared to do so³⁹.

18. According to the *Victims Compensation Review Report*, the victims compensation schemes in other jurisdictions reviewed within Australia and the United Kingdom include exceptions to time limits.⁴⁰
19. The Australian Government recently announced a Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Care.⁴¹ A 10-year time limit could exclude many victims appearing before the Royal Commission from receiving victims compensation in NSW.
20. The **Basic Principles** have for over 25 years been the United Nations' benchmark for victim's rights. Although the NSW government asserts that the Bill is consistent with the Basic Principles, measures which reduce overall funds available for compensation and significantly restrict claims for psychological injuries clearly run counter to the Principles which support the 'strengthening and expansion'⁴² of funds for compensation. In addition, the Basic Principles demand that a holistic approach be taken to the question of reparations. The restriction of claims made on the basis of serious psychological injury clearly run counter to the recommendation of financial compensation for victims who have 'sustained significant bodily injury or impairment of physical *or mental health* as a result of serious crimes'⁴³ (emphasis added).

Conclusion

21. The proposed changes to Victims Compensation legislation will have a disproportionate impact on victims of some of the most serious crimes, including victims of child abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence. To pass the current legislation would have significant and detrimental effects on the human rights of thousands of claimants already in the system, and make it more difficult for women to access just compensation for crimes committed against them in the future.
22. The Bill, if passed, will provide an institutional obstacle to the full enjoyment of human rights for women and girls in NSW who are the victims of violent crime. In light of this situation, the signatories to this letter respectfully request that the Special Rapporteur send an urgent appeal to the Government of New South Wales to withdraw this Bill and engage in a proper consultation with those who will be impacted by the changes. In the alternative, if the Bill does go ahead, delay this Bill until amendments are tabled to:
 - a. Reverse the retrospectivity provisions so as allow those victims of crime currently in the system to have their claims finalised within the existing Victims Compensation Scheme.
 - b. Explicitly include within 'recognition payments' financial compensation to account for the significant psychological injury associated with domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assault.

³⁹ Human Rights Council, Fourteenth Session, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences*, Rashida Manjoo, 23 April 2010, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/14/22 [40].

⁴⁰ PricewaterhouseCoopers, NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice Review of the Victims Compensation Fund, 12 July 2012 at 98

⁴¹ Prime Minister Julia Gillard, *Announcement of Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse*, 12 November 2012 accessed on 17 May 2013 at: <http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/transcript-press-conference-32>

⁴² U.N. General Assembly, *Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power*, 29 November 1985, U.N. Doc. A/RES/40/34 [13].

⁴³ U.N. General Assembly, *Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power*, 29 November 1985, U.N. Doc. A/RES/40/34 [12].

- c. Widen the category of documentary evidence accepted to support a claim to include 'support services' as defined in the Bill which includes non-government organisations such as welfare, health, counselling and legal assistance services.
- d. Clarify that there should be no upper time limits for the making of claims relating to domestic violence, child abuse or sexual assault.

Signed by,



Janet Loughman, Principal Solicitor,
Women's Legal Services NSW




Alastair McEwin, Director,
Community Legal Centres NSW




Anthony Kerin, National President,
Australian Lawyers Alliance
Lawyers



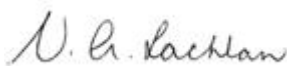

Julie Oberin, Chairperson,
Australian Women Against Violence
Alliance (AWAVA)



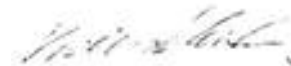

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Liz Plnnock, Managing Solicitor,
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Daniel Stubbs, Centre Director,
Inner City Legal Centre (ICLC)



Janene Cootes, Executive Officer,
Intellectual Disability Rights Service



Anna Cody, Director,
Kingsford Legal Centre



Betty Green, Manager,
Liverpool Women's Health Centre



Moo Baulch, LGBTI Domestic and Family
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LGBTIQ Domestic Violence Interagency



Prue Gregory, Principal Solicitor,
Macarthur Legal Centre



Michael Walton, Principal Solicitor,
Marrickville Legal Centre



Nassim Arrage, Principal Solicitor,
Mid North Coast Community Legal
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Julia Hall, Executive Director,
National Association of Community Legal
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Di Hirsh

Di Hirsh OAM, National President,
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Tracy Howe

Tracy Howe, Chief Executive Officer,
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Terri King

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Katrina Ironside

Katrina Ironside, Coordinator &
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Jane Sanders

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The Shopfront Youth Legal Centre

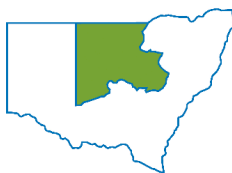


Julie Stubbs

Julie Stubbs, Professor,
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Rachael Martin

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Marie Hume

Marie Hume, Secretary,
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Kat Armstrong

Kat Armstrong, Director,
Women in Prison Advocacy Network



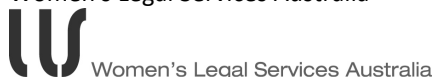
Lesley Kirkwood

Lesley Kirkwood, Managing Solicitor
Women's Law Centre of WA Inc



Rhonda Payget

Rhonda Payget, Convenor
Women's Legal Services Australia



Margaret Augerinos

Margaret Augerinos, Committee
Member, Women's Services Network



APPENDIX A – Signatories to this appeal

Australian Lawyers Alliance is a national association of lawyers, academics and other professionals dedicated to protecting and promoting justice, freedom and the rights of the individual.

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) is a Commonwealth funded National Women's Alliance that focuses on addressing all forms violence against women, to ensure that all women and children are able to live free from all forms of violence and abuse. AWAVA has 19 member organisations which are national or state peak organisations or networks from the preventing violence against women sector

Central Coast Community Legal Centre is a not for profit community based service which provides free, accessible legal services.

The **Centre for Gender-Related Violence Studies** is a centre within the University of New South Wales. Established in 1999, the Centre aims to contribute to the body of evidence addressing causes, consequences and intervention strategies for gender-based violence and the translation of this into good practice in policy, law and service delivery. Major projects of the Centre include the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, the Safe at Home Safe and Work project and the gendered violence research network.

The **Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services of SA** consists of 22 member organisations that provide support and accommodation to women and children experiencing domestic and family violence in South Australia. It advocates for women and children affected by domestic and family violence and provides policy advice to government to ensure that services are appropriate for women and children

Community Legal Centres NSW Incorporated is the peak representative body for Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in NSW; CLCs work in the public interest to provide access to justice to those of most need in the community.

The **Deli Women and Children's Centre** seeks to ensure that women, children and families, particularly those affected by domestic violence, are happy, healthy, safe and resilient; and able to participate in connected and strong families and community.

The **Domestic Violence Legal Workers Network (DVLWN)** is a West Australian-based network promoting and advocating the rights of victims of family and domestic violence.

Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre provides free legal advice and assistance to communities in the Blue Mountains, Lithgow, Oberon and Bathurst regions of New South Wales. They prioritise services to disadvantaged and vulnerable people, including victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Far West Community Legal Centre is a generalist community legal centre that provides advice and assistance on a broad range of legal issues to people who live in far western New South Wales. Approximately 37% of the Centre's work revolves around assisting women and children who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The Centre operates in an area of New South Wales where the rate of disadvantage is high and in Local Government areas within the top 10 in the State of NSW where reported incidents of domestic violence are highest, with a high percentage of the population who identify as Aboriginal.

The **Hunter Community Legal Centre** provides free legal advice to people who live, work or study in the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Great Lakes and Hunter Valley Regions.

Inner City Legal Centre provides legal services for disadvantaged people in the Sydney city and Northern Beaches areas and for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex communities of New South Wales.

Intellectual Disability Rights Service is a disability advocacy service and community legal centre providing legal assistance to people with intellectual disability and support persons for people with intellectual disability in the criminal justice system.

Kingsford Legal Centre is a community legal centre that specialises in discrimination law and represents many women who have experienced sexual assault and domestic violence.

The **LGBTIQ Domestic Violence Interagency** is a statewide network of government and non-government organizations and agencies working collaboratively to respond to issues relating to domestic and family violence for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people. The interagency has a broad membership and has met consistently since 2001.

Liverpool Women's Health Centre is a community based feminist health service by women, for women.

Macarthur Legal Centre is a community legal centre, which provides free legal advice, referrals and assistance to residents of the Macarthur region of New South Wales.

Marrickville Legal Centre is a community legal centre that has been operating in the Marrickville area for over 30 years. They provide free legal advice, assistance and education to the local community with the assistance of a dedicated team of volunteer solicitors and students.

Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre provides free legal services to people living and working in the local government areas of Greater Taree, Port Macquarie – Hastings and Kempsey Shire.

The **National Association of Community Legal Centres Incorporated** is the peak national body for Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in Australia. CLCs are not-for-profit, community-based organizations that provide legal and related services to the public, focusing on the disadvantaged and people with special needs.

National Council of Jewish Women of Australia Ltd (NCJWA) is a national Jewish women's organisation whose agenda includes empowerment of women and service to the community locally, nationally and internationally.

The **NSW Women's Refuge Movement** is a state-wide organisation representing a network of refuges and other specialist domestic and family violence services and aims to see all women and children who are experiencing domestic and family violence receive a quality response, service and support

North and North West Community Legal Service is a generalist community legal centre that provides access to legal advice and representation to people in need residing in the New England and North Western New South Wales region including Armidale, Moree, Inverell, Gunnedah, Tamworth, Narrabri, Glen Innes, Walcha and Tingha.

Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH) provides access to justice through pro bono legal services to marginalized and disadvantaged people and the community organizations that support them. They also address injustice through law reform, policy work and legal education.

Refugee Advice Casework Service (Australia) Incorporated has over 25 years' experience as an independent community legal centre whose purpose is to provide a free, specialist legal service for asylum seekers and refugees.

The **Shopfront Youth Legal Centre** is a free legal service for homeless and disadvantaged people aged 25 and under.

Western New South Wales Community Legal Centre Incorporated covers central western New South Wales and provides access to justice by advocating for the rights of socially, culturally, geographically and financially marginalised people in the community.

Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre Incorporated is a community legal centre for Aboriginal women, children and youth living in New South Wales, with a focus on assisting clients who are, or have been victims of violence.

Women Everywhere Advocating Violence Elimination (WEAVE) is a National Women's Alliance that aims to eliminate all forms of male violence (including sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation and trafficking). Their vision is to ensure that all women and children are able to live free from all forms of violence and abuse.

Women in Prison Advocacy Network (WIPAN) works to raise awareness of and progress the cultural, social, economic and political inequalities that exist for criminalised women by addressing the policies and practices that sustain these injustices. The Network takes a grassroots approach to addressing women's social justice issues by directly engaging criminalised women post-release.

Women's Law Centre of Western Australia Incorporated provides free legal assistance to disadvantaged women in Western Australia in the areas of family law, family and domestic violence, care and protection matters and criminal injuries compensation.

Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) is a national network of women's legal centres that specialise in women's legal issues.

Women's Legal Services NSW is a community legal centre that aims to achieve access to justice and a just legal system for women in NSW. We prioritise working with women who have experienced domestic violence and sexual assault.

Women's Services Network (WESNET) is a national women's peak advocacy body which works on behalf of women and children who are experiencing or have experienced domestic or family violence.