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MEDIA RELEASE

Massive cuts to state-wide family violence legal service

A week before Christmas, Victoria's women's family violence legal service has learned that it will have a \$200,000 cut from the federal government to its already tight budget.

Women's Legal Service Victoria (WLSV) provides more than 3,400 women across Victoria with free specialised family violence and family law legal services every year. The not for profit organisation runs duty lawyer services for women at the family violence and family law courts, skypes legal assistance to women in refuges and family violence services across Victoria and provides a state-wide legal advice line.

Joanna Fletcher, CEO of WLSV explains that the funding cuts made by the federal Attorney-General's Department, that will come into effect in July 2017, will require the state-wide service to cut a number of integral programs they run across the state.

"This cut will have a devastating impact on women who access WLSV to help them make decisions about protecting themselves and their children from an abusive partner. Let's not mince words here, these can be life and death decisions, with more than one woman every week being killed by a current or former partner."

"Every year our free legal advice line helps almost 900 women with free legal advice. It looks like that service will no longer be feasible. Our duty lawyer services, which help women at the courts, are also at risk." said Ms Fletcher.

About WLSV

Women's Legal Service Victoria (WLSV) is a not for profit organisation which has been providing free legal services to women since 1982. We work with and for women experiencing particular disadvantage to address legal issues arising from relationship breakdown or violence.

Key numbers from [WLSV 2015/16](#):

- 3407 women were assisted by WLSV
- 68% of all WLSV clients had no or low income
- 36% of all WLSV clients were born outside of Australia
- 39% of all WLSV child protection clients have a disability

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