

Brandis backflips on legal funds

THE Turnbull government has reversed plans to cut millions of dollars from community legal services.

Attorney-General George Brandis has announced \$55.7 million to extend legal aid funding that is due to end on June 30.

It takes the government's legal aid commitment to a record \$1.7 billion over five years to 2020 and will target domestic violence and legal aid for indigenous Australians.

Labor seized on the reports, calling it a victory for legal aid campaigners and a "humiliating backflip" by the

Turnbull government, which was due to effectively slash \$35 million in funding from the sector from July 1.

"While the reversal of these cuts is welcome, it is beyond time for the Coalition and George Brandis to stop toying with the funding of these vital services," shadow attorney-general Mark Dreyfus said

"The uncertainty faced by

the centres in recent months and years has been incredibly damaging, with many already losing experienced staff and unable to plan for the future."

Senator Brandis said the announcement would be made ahead of the May budget to prevent legal centres cutting jobs while they planned their own budgets.



George Brandis.

PHOTO: AAP