

Secretariat: Louise Smith

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Law Council of Australia  
National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Services  
National Association of Community Legal Centres  
National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum  
National Legal Aid

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**ALAF statement of support — Continuation of direct funding for the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) program**

The Australian Legal Assistance Forum (ALAF) supports the work of the national Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) program, and acknowledges the program's crucial contribution to providing essential legal assistance services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence.

The FVPLS program's member organisations deliver legal help, counselling, and other community support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in rural and remote Australia who are victims/survivors of family violence, including sexual assault and abuse. The program and services are uniquely designed to support the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence.

Nationally more than 90 percent of the program's clients are Aboriginal women and children. Aboriginal women continue to be described as the most legally disadvantaged group in Australia, often experiencing multiple legal and non-legal needs and significant barriers to justice outcomes.

Nationally, Aboriginal women are hospitalised for non-fatal family violence assaults at 31.4 times the rate of other women. In addition, family violence is the key contributor to the over-representation of Aboriginal children in the child protection system, and to homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

In operation for over 15 years, the FVPLS program has played a key role in supporting the development of significant and trusted relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, growing sector capacity and has a recognised expertise across the domestic violence, legal assistance and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services sectors.

The program's strong collaborative focus, effective grassroots relationships and family violence expertise have enabled member organisations to effectively engage with vulnerable victims/survivors of family violence and deliver high quality legal assistance services in response to community need.

Funding services focused on preventing and responding to family violence reduces the gap between health, social and wellbeing outcomes for the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population. It is clear there is an ongoing need for the FVPLS program to provide these essential services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence across Australia.

The ALAF supports the FVPLS program and its essential role in the justice system in increasing access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence.

The FVPLS program's member organisations include:

- Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria (Melbourne, Mildura, Gippsland, Barwon South West)
- Aboriginal Family Legal Service Southern Queensland (Roma)
- Binaal Billa Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (Forbes)
- Central Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Unit Aboriginal Corporation (Alice Springs, Tennant Creek)
- Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation (Port Augusta, Ceduna, Pt Lincoln)
- Many Rivers Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (Kempsey)
- Marninwarnitkura Family Violence Prevention Unit WA (Fitzroy Crossing)
- Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Domestic and Family Violence Service (Alice Springs, NPY Tri-state region)
- Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service (Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Mount Isa, Brisbane)
- Southern Aboriginal Corporation Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (Albany)
- Thiyamali Family Violence Service Inc. NSW (Moree, Bourke, Walgett)
- Warra Warra Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (Broken Hill)
- Western Australia Family Violence Legal Service (Perth, Broome, Carnarvon, Kununurra, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Port Hedland).

For more information about the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services program visit [www.nationalfvpls.org](http://www.nationalfvpls.org) or contact Antoinette Braybrook, Convenor National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum on 03 9244 3333 or 0409 411 120.

### **What is ALAF?**

The Australian Legal Assistance Forum (ALAF) is a body whose participants are representatives of the following organisations:

- National Legal Aid representing the Directors of all Legal Aid Commissions in Australia and through them those Commissions.
- The Law Council of Australia representing all Australian lawyers and their State and Territory representative bodies.
- The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services.
- The National Association of Community Legal Centres representing Community Legal Centres throughout Australia.
- The National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum.

The Australian Legal Assistance Forum exists to address Australian legal assistance issues in a cooperative way enhancing access to justice across Australia.

### **Media contact**

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