

# NATIONAL FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION LEGAL SERVICES

WORKING TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED JUSTICE OUTCOMES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

16 October 2017

## **Turnbull Government's expansion of Domestic Violence Units to have little impact on addressing family violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children**

Today's announcement by Attorney-General George Brandis QC of additional funding for new domestic violence units is a missed opportunity to support our nation's most vulnerable women, according to the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum (National FVPLS Forum). The National FVPLS Forum welcomes the expansion of domestic violence units but says there will be little change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence, predominately women and children.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors of family violence face many barriers when attempting to access mainstream services," Antoinette Braybrook, Convenor of the National FVPLS Forum. "Given the significant overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women as victims/survivors of family violence, there needs to be a greater investment in Aboriginal community controlled organisations such as Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLSs)" said Ms Braybrook.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children are disproportionately impacted by family violence. Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised from family violence and 10 times more likely to die of violent assault than other women. These rates can only be made better by access to services like FVPLSs.

"The success of Aboriginal community controlled organisations like FVPLSs is well recognised. Our services see first-hand the many barriers experienced by and the lack of trust our women have in a mainstream setting" said Ms Braybrook. "Culturally safe, specialised services like FVPLSs break down barriers to reporting violence and seeking support".

The Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their children had a significant focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and provides an important framework and it's essential that organisations like FVPLSs be supported to deliver important programs such as the Domestic Violence Units.

"Support for Aboriginal community led initiatives and solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors must remain a priority to break the vicious cycle of violence and disadvantage experienced by our women and children," said Ms Braybrook.

"FVPLSs work at the frontline and provide, culturally safe and holistic supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors of family violence," explained Ms Braybrook. "We must have real and concrete action to keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children safe".

**Contact: Ben Schokman for Antoinette Braybrook, Convenor, National FVPLS Forum  
on 0403 622 810 or [bschokman@fvpls.org](mailto:bschokman@fvpls.org)**

Media Release