

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

14 December 2015 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aboriginal women's voices should be heard at the 2016 National Summit

The National Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum (National FVPLS Forum) welcomes the decision by the Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG) to hold a National Summit on Family Violence in 2016.

The National FVPLS is calling on COAG to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's voices are at the forefront of the National Summit. It is essential that community-controlled organisations providing frontline services to victim/survivors, such as FVPLSs, actively participate in this important forum. This will help ensure the voices and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are heard and inform policy making.

Family violence is a national problem which affects Australians from all backgrounds and all walks of life. It is a national crisis that demands a national response. Marginalisation and disadvantage places some groups at particularly high risk.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are the most legally disadvantaged women in Australia. Our women are especially vulnerable to family violence and require additional support," said Antoinette Braybrook, Convenor of the National FVPLS Forum. "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are vastly overrepresented as victims of family violence - 34 times more likely to be hospitalised for family violence, and 11 times more likely to be murdered. Sadly our women are at the heart of the family violence crisis, and therefore must also be at the heart of the response to it."

Frontline family violence service providers like our members have important insights to share with policymakers. Our expertise is based on years of practice delivering services including community legal education, early intervention and prevention, and legal support for some of the most marginalised and vulnerable members of our community.

The National FVPLS Forum look forward to the opportunity to engage with the National Summit, and to contribute our knowledge and experience to the national effort to end domestic violence.

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Media Release