

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Aboriginal service overlooked for Aboriginal family violence funding

The National Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum (FVPLS) is very disappointed in the recent tender decision for a new Aboriginal family violence legal service in Perth. An established Aboriginal organisation with strong community trust and relationships was overlooked in favour of a mainstream, non-Aboriginal service.

“We know self-determination is the key to addressing family violence in Aboriginal communities. This was an opportunity for Government to match its words with action, and fund an Aboriginal organisation to work within its own community,” said National Convenor of the FVPLS Forum Antoinette Braybrook.

“Cultural safety is about more than hiring one or two Aboriginal staff members. Cultural safety is about Aboriginal leadership, and community control. It is about adherence to the principles of self determination,” said June Oscar, CEO of FVPLS service Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre.

The FVPLS program provides culturally safe legal assistance to Aboriginal victims/survivors of family violence, in areas including intervention orders, victims' assistance, child protection and family law. Aboriginal Family Law Services is an FVPLS provider that delivers family violence legal services in Broome, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Kununurra, Port Hedland and Carnarvon.

“It has been our experience that Aboriginal victims/survivors of family violence are unlikely to access mainstream legal services. But they will access culturally safe Aboriginal services. There already exists an FVPLS in Western Australia with the experience to deliver a holistic service model that meets the complex needs of Aboriginal victims/survivors of family violence in Perth, and that Aboriginal people feel safe accessing,” Ms Oscar said.

The FVPLS program is funded by the Commonwealth to provide services in rural and remote areas. Only the Victorian Government funds the provision of services in urban areas.

“This was a prime opportunity for State/Commonwealth collaboration, expanding the capacity of a successful Aboriginal organisation to deliver services to Aboriginal communities. To say we are disappointed in this decision is an understatement,” Ms Braybrook concluded.

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