

# 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

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## **Action to combat violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women invisible in the Budget**

Targeted action to address the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors of family violence is invisible in the Federal Budget.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are at the epicentre of the national family violence crisis, yet specific initiatives to confront this crisis and invest in services for safety are invisible in the Budget,” said Antoinette Braybrook, Convenor of the National FVPLS Forum. “This is yet another missed opportunity for the Government to better resource Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) who provide legal services and supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence, with more than 90% of our clients nationally being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.”

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised from family violence and 10 times more likely to die of violent assault than other women. The question must be asked why there is no targeted action to address this crisis.

The Budget includes \$100 million over three years on initiatives to reduce violence against women and their children. This is inadequate to meet the needs of women fleeing violence for their safety. It is also silent on a specific allocation of funding on programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Without targeted investment in services like FVPLSs the horrific disproportionate impact of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women will only get worse. The Budget also fails to reverse the cuts to Community Legal Centres and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services.

“Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is at epidemic levels. It will cost the nation \$2.2 billion by 2021-22. Its moral cost – which sees lives lost and communities destroyed - is unquantifiable. Yet tragically a response to this violence is invisible in the Budget Papers.”

“FVPLSs provide essential services for safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence and deliver early intervention prevention programs to break the vicious cycle of violence. Further investment is needed to build the capacity of existing services and address service gaps to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women can access these services for safety.”

“Budgets set out the priorities of Government. Ending the disproportionate impact of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women should have been front and centre of this Budget.”

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Media Release