

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

Statement from the National FVPLS Forum on the New National Agreement on Closing the Gap

30 July 2020

The National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services Forum (National FVPLS Forum) welcomes the historic new Closing the Gap Agreement released today. As members of the Coalition of Peaks, the National FVPLS Forum came together with more than fifty other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled peak bodies to fight for our communities.

However we are disappointed by the lack of ambition on the national justice targets shown by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments. Governments could have increased the ambition of justice targets to end the over-incarceration of our people but have chosen not to, against the advice of the Coalition of Peaks. This comes with the devastating news of another Aboriginal death in custody in WA overnight.

When it comes to ending the unacceptable rates of family violence against our people, our work is far from over. The agreement contains a commitment to further work over the coming three-months on a target to reduce family violence. “We are standing firm on the need for a strong, ambitious, numerical target to end family violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – particularly our women and their children” says Phynea Clarke, Acting Chair of the National FVPLS Forum.

Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – predominantly women and their children - devastates communities and destroys families.

In comparison with other women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised from family violence and 10 times more likely to die as a result of violent assault.

“Over the coming three months, we will continue to push for a strong target on family violence that is numerical, measurable and will deliver real change for our people,” says Wynetta Dewis, CEO of Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service (QIFVLS) - a National FVPLS Forum member.

The work of the Coalition of Peaks is one part of a much bigger picture, of what has come before us and what still needs to be done. As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we are standing on the shoulders of giants; our ancestors. They are our strength in all that we do. For the Coalition of Peaks, the National Agreement is not just words. They represent actions that can make a real difference to the lives of our people, our families and communities.

To read the full new National Agreement on Closing the Gap, head to the Coalition of Peaks website: <http://coalitionofpeaks.org.au/final-national-agreement-on-closing-the-gap/>

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About the National FVPLS Forum

The National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services Forum (National FVPLS Forum) was formally established in May 2012. It is comprised of thirteen Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (FVPLS) member organisations across Australia that provide holistic, specialist, culturally safe legal and non-legal support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing or at risk of family violence – predominantly women and their children.

For more information and to sign up to our mailing list, head to www.nationalfvpls.org

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