

# NATIONAL FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION LEGAL SERVICES

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

## Media Release

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### **The 2018 Budget is yet another missed opportunity for the Federal Government to invest in ending family violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women**

The 2018 Budget offers no new funding for specialised, culturally safe frontline services such as Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS), despite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experiencing family violence at vastly disproportionate rates.

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.

“The Federal Government has identified violence against women as a national crisis however this Budget has neglected the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors of family violence” says Antoinette Braybrook, National Convenor of the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum.

Nationally, approximately 90% of FVPLS clients are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. At present, FVPLS services are only currently funded by the Commonwealth Government to June 2020 to service specified regional and remote locations, leaving significant parts of the country unserved. Increased, secure and long-term funding for FVPLS’s would ensure national coverage and address the high risk to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women’s lives.

“Our services are overstretched and underfunded. A lack of commitment to national coverage creates an urban disadvantage for our women to access culturally safe support” says Ms Braybrook “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are at the epicentre of the national family violence crisis, yet the 2018 Budget is silent on culturally safe, specialised initiatives to confront this”

FVPLS core funding under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy has been frozen at 2013-2014 levels, with no CPI increase.

“The lack of CPI increases has significant ramifications for Aboriginal community controlled organisations such as FVPLSs, including

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challenges in meeting increasing operational costs and being competitive with salaries for the employment and retention of staff in the sector” says Ms Braybrook.

For FVPLSs, the absence of CPI increases over the 2013-14 to 2020 period results in a cumulative loss of approximately \$9.7 million dollars.

“In two years we will be fighting the same fight, to have the Federal Government recognise that violence against our women and children is a national emergency that requires significant investment” says Ms Braybrook.

It is estimated that the national annual cost of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children will reach \$2.2 billion by 2021-22. This does not include the costs of flow-on impacts on their children.

The 2018 Budget also neglects to allocate adequate funding to the Closing the Gap Refresh.

“The Closing the Gap refresh is a key mechanism to address the disproportionate rates of family violence through the adoption of justice targets. “adds Ms Braybrook “The new 10-year framework is set up to fail without tangible commitment by the Federal Government”

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