

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

Media Release

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Without justice targets and a strong focus on family violence, the Closing the Gap Framework will continue to fail Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children

Today the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull delivered the 10th annual Closing the Gap report, marking yet another year in which the Government policy has failed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly women and children, according to the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum (National FVPLS Forum).

“There is an urgent need for justice targets to reduce both incarceration and rates of family violence if we are to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities,” said Antoinette Braybrook, Convenor of the National FVPLS Forum.

Today also marks the start of Ochre Ribbon week, an annual campaign which raises awareness of the disproportionate and devastating impacts of family violence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – especially women and children.

“A core component of any justice target has to be a family violence target, developed in genuine partnership with specialist Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Without this we would be leaving a gaping hole in the Closing the Gap Refresh process and we would be failing our women and children,” said Ms Braybrook.

“Family violence and justice targets are essential to fighting the crisis levels of violence against our women and the removal of our children from their families,” said Ms Braybrook.

“Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised from family violence than other women. We are 10 times more likely to die of violent assault and are now the fastest growing prison population in the country. Most of our women behind bars have experienced family violence and the vast majority are mothers,” said Ms Braybrook.

The Prime Minister’s Closing the Gap Report acknowledges that, “Addressing high rates of violence, including family violence, in Indigenous communities is a key to improving outcomes in other areas across the life course, including achievements in education, employment and health outcomes”.

“If we want to see better outcomes over the next ten years, the Government must show leadership on implementing justice targets, including action to reduce rates of family violence and incarceration. Doing this would demonstrate real commitment to creating enduring positive change in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children,” said Ms Braybrook.

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The National FVPLS Forum is the national peak body for 14 Aboriginal Community Controlled services around Australia who deliver culturally safe and specialist legal and non-legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence, and design and deliver specialist early intervention and prevention and community education programs. Our services are open to men, women and children but more than 90% of our clients across the country are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

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