



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

FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION LEGAL SERVICES

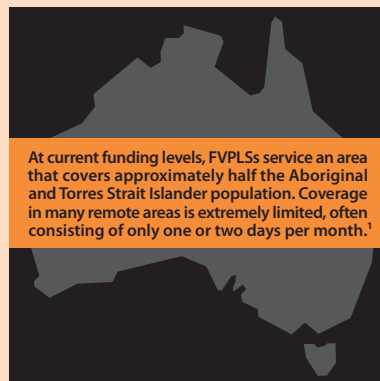
Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLSs) were established in recognition of:

- The gap in access to legal services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors of family violence and sexual assault;
- The high number of legal conflicts within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS); and
- High rates of family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

FVPLSs provide frontline legal assistance, casework, counselling and court support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and children who are victim/survivors of family violence. Legal services are provided to victim/survivors in matters related to:

- Family violence (i.e. VRO, AVO – note the different terminology across jurisdictions);
- Victims of crime compensation;
- Family law; and
- Child protection.

FVPLSs also provide an important community legal education and early intervention and prevention function. FVPLSs have adopted a holistic, wrap-around service delivery model that prioritises legal service delivery while recognising and addressing the multitude of interrelated issues that our clients face. Nationally, 90 percent of our clients are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL FVPLS FORUM

The National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum was established in May 2012. It is comprised of fourteen FVPLSs across Australia. The Forum's goal is to work in collaboration across FVPLSs and increase access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors of family violence.

The Forum provides advice and input to Government and ensures a unified FVPLS response to addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence. The Forum has worked with members to develop tools for capacity building, good governance, professional development, training, and data collection and evaluation.

NATIONAL FVPLS FORUM KEY MESSAGES

- Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women 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 be killed as a result of violent assault.
- Family violence has significant, far-reaching and multiple impacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – especially women and children. Through our casework with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors, FVPLSs sees the multi-generational impacts of family violence on a daily basis, especially the intrinsic link between family violence and child protection.
- FVPLSs are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations - our communities know and trust our staff and services.
- We are unique, experienced and specialist service providers delivering culturally safe legal and non-legal services within which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is acknowledged and celebrated.

NATIONAL FVPLS FORUM KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The National FVPLS Forum believes that a national strategic response is required to address this national crisis. It should incorporate the following key initiatives:

- Development of an ongoing joint government and stakeholder mechanism to provide advice and expertise to government in addressing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially women and children;
- Reinstatement of a reinvigorated, stand-alone National Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Program;
- Long-term and secure funding of FVPLSs to adequately address the level of need;
- Specific priority areas for policy development include:
 - Addressing barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women accessing family violence services; and
 - Addressing the nexus between being a victim/survivor of family violence and incarceration rates, child protection and the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- Development of justice targets in partnership with Aboriginal community controlled organisations, with such targets aimed at reducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons' interaction with the justice system and family violence rates; and
- Development of a national data body on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence and incarceration rates.

NATIONAL FVPLS FORUM MEMBERS

- Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria (Melbourne HO, Mildura, Gippsland, Barwon South West)
- Aboriginal Family Law Service Western Australia (Perth HO, Broome, Carnarvon, Kununnura, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Port Hedland)
- Aboriginal Family Legal Service Southern Queensland (Roma)
- Binaal Billa Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (Forbes)
- Central Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Unit (Alice Springs HO, Tennant Creek)
- Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation (Port Augusta HO, Ceduna, Pt Lincoln)
- Many Rivers Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (Kempsey)
- Marninwarnitkura Family Violence Prevention Unit WA (Fitzroy Crossing)
- North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service (Darwin, Katherine, Top End)
- Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Domestic and Family Violence Service (Alice Springs, NPY Tri-state Region)
- Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service (Cairns HO, Townsville, Rockhampton, Mount Isa, Brisbane)
- Southern Aboriginal Corporation Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (Albany, WA)
- Thiyama-li Family Violence Service Inc. NSW (Moree HO, Bourke, Walgett)
- Warra-Warra Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (Broken Hill)

ENQUIRIES

For any enquires in relation to the National FVPLS Forum please contact the National Secretariat on (03) 9244 3333 or secretariat@fvpls.org

www.nationalfvpls.org

1 NOUS Group, Family Violence Prevention Legal Services – Research and Needs Analysis Report, 2013 (unpublished).

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