

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

Thursday 12 December 2018

National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum welcomes partnership approach to Closing the Gap Refresh

The National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) Forum, joining with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Bodies Across Australia, welcomes today's announcement that COAG has agreed to a formal partnership approach to the Closing the Gap Refresh.

The details of formal partnership between COAG and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be settled in February 2019, following a determined campaign by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies including the National FVPLS Forum.

The partnership will include a Ministerial Council on Closing the Gap with expanded membership to include representation from COAG and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through their peak bodies.

Before the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies intervened, COAG was due to settle a new Closing the Gap framework and targets without the full involvement and agreement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"We are extremely pleased that COAG endorsed the formal partnership proposal that we and other peak bodies put forward and are committing to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples," Antoinette Braybrook, National FVPLS Forum Convenor said.

"We expect that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through their representatives and Organisations will have an ongoing and equal role in the design, implementation, monitoring and review of the Closing the Gap strategy going forward. The National FVPLS Forum and our members are key stakeholders in this process and we look forward to working closely with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to develop justice, family violence and other targets to improve the safety, wellbeing and equality of our women and children."

"Today marks a positive step forward for our sector and we look forward to working with COAG to negotiate and agree the refreshed framework, targets and action plans which will be finalised through the new joint Committee by mid-2019", Ms Braybrook said.

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Last week the Prime Minister agreed that Closing the Gap needed to be more than a strategy for governments, but a strategy that is owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well.

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) CEO Ms Pat Turner said: “We are pleased that the Prime Minister and COAG have finally recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must play an integral part in the making of the decisions that affect their lives – and it’s the only way forward to closing the gap.”

MEDIA CONTACTS: For more information or to arrange interviews with Antoinette Braybrook, National Convenor, please call Amanda Bresnan, National FVPLS Forum Secretariat Executive Officer, on 0448 060 765.