

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 3 March 2016

## *United in laughter and tears: celebrating the success of Sisters Day Out®*



Aboriginal Family  
Violence Prevention  
& Legal Service Victoria  
Standing Firm Against  
Family Violence

On Saturday 5 March 2016 the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria (FVPLS Victoria) will host an 'Evening with Sisters Day Out'. The gala event will celebrate *Sisters Day Out* reaching a milestone of 100 workshops.

FVPLS Victoria's *Sisters Day Out* program is designed and delivered by Aboriginal women for Aboriginal women. This is the secret to its success. It draws on the strength and resilience of Aboriginal women to reduce vulnerabilities to violence and break down barriers to reporting it.

"Reporting violence and seeking help is hard for any woman. We know that Aboriginal women face greater barriers," said FVPLS Victoria Chief Executive Officer, Antoinette Braybrook. "FVPLS Victoria is a trusted Aboriginal community controlled organisation. *Sisters Day Out* builds on this trust, and it takes our service and many others to Aboriginal women and communities."

The *Sisters Day Out* program has survived despite significant funding uncertainty. From humble beginnings in Morwell in July 2007, where there were 15 Aboriginal women in attendance, the workshops now regularly welcome up to 200 Aboriginal women. On 16 February 2016 we reached the 100<sup>th</sup> *Sisters Day Out* workshop and over 400 Aboriginal women travelled from across Victoria to attend.

"The disproportionate impact of violence against Aboriginal women and their children devastates our communities and destroys our families. We must never forget this pain, but we must also remember to celebrate our successes, to celebrate the unity and bond between Aboriginal women that we see at our workshops," said Ms Braybrook.

*Sisters Day Out* has touched the lives of nearly 8,000 Aboriginal women and girls. According to ABS statistics this equates to one third of Victorian Aboriginal women and girls. We have reached out to nearly every community in Victoria. Our engagement with Aboriginal women is an overwhelming success and was confirmed by an independent evaluation by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation in 2014.

An 'Evening with Sisters Day Out' is more than just a gala dinner. It is a recognition that Aboriginal women's lives matter and that there is hope for a future without violence. One workshop participant shared:

*"How healing it is be around great Koori women and friends and reconnect to my culture. Sharing problems with other Koori women who understand me really helps me feel that I am not alone...Listening to other women's stories of survival gave me hope and strength to carry on in life's journey."*

Over 400 people will attend an 'Evening with Sisters Day Out' and demonstrate their support for our innovative program. Attendees will include Aboriginal women who have participated in the workshops, politicians, judges and magistrates, the press and other members of the public. Ms Braybrook said, "On Saturday night we will celebrate our survival with laughter and tears but the very next day and the day after that and so on we will get back to the business of securing ongoing funding for *Sisters Day Out* and ending violence against Aboriginal women."

You can support FVPLS Victoria to raise funds to #savesistersdayout through our crowd funding campaign: <https://www.gofundme.com/sistersdayout>

*Note: FVPLS Victoria provides culturally safe legal assistance, early intervention prevention and community legal education to Aboriginal victims/survivors of family violence and sexual assault. Our legal assistance includes intervention orders, victims' of crime assistance, child protection and family law.*

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