

Media Release

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Aboriginal women leading action against Family Violence



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

The Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria (FVPLS Victoria) welcomes the announcement of a \$500,000 funding package by the Victorian Government today. This funding commitment ensures the future of *Sisters Day Out*® and Dilly Bag workshops for the next two years.

Sisters Day Out and Dilly Bag workshops are part of FVPLS Victoria's early intervention, prevention and community education program. The overwhelming success of these programs rests largely on the fact that they are designed and delivered by Aboriginal women for Aboriginal women.

Sisters Day Out takes a broad range of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services directly to Aboriginal communities to break down barriers to reporting family violence. The workshops provide a culturally safe space for Aboriginal women to draw on their resilience to reduce vulnerability to violence. Since 2007, more than 100 *Sisters Day Out* workshops have been delivered to over 8,000 Aboriginal women across Victoria.

"At FVPLS Victoria we strive to support Aboriginal women and children to not only gain access to services for their safety but to also access programs that keep our culture and identity strong and vibrant" said Antoinette Braybrook, CEO of FVPLS Victoria. "Strong connection to culture is the foundation of preventing violence against Aboriginal women. Prevention is and always will be our core business."

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. The 100th *Sisters Day Out* workshop earlier this year saw over 400 Aboriginal women travelling from all across the State to attend.

Sisters Day Out and Dilly Bag were recognised as best practice by the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The Commission acknowledged the disproportionate levels of violence against Aboriginal women and said "these are programs we need to see more of and not less of."

After 14 years of operation, FVPLS Victoria has witnessed firsthand the impact of the family violence epidemic. "Aboriginal women are 25 times more likely to be killed or injured as a result of family violence. The disproportionate impact of violence against Aboriginal women and their children devastates our communities and destroys our families" says Ms Braybrook.

This funding commitment will go a long way towards supporting FVPLS Victoria's work to ending violence against Aboriginal women. "The Victorian Government listened to Aboriginal women's voices. Its commitment to support Aboriginal led initiatives, particularly initiatives by Aboriginal women, is commendable" said Ms Braybrook.

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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Media Contact: Jenna Davey-Burns for Antoinette Braybrook, CEO. 9244 3320 jdavey-burns@fvpls.org