

# Media Release

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*Investing in Aboriginal community controlled organisations is the key to combat violence against Aboriginal women*



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 Victorian Government's focus on addressing family violence in its Budget released today.

The Budget invests \$572 million into preventing and addressing Victoria's family violence crisis including \$25.7 million in dedicated funding for Aboriginal specific initiatives. "The most effective way to implement this funding is to invest in Aboriginal community controlled organisations and building on programs that work," said Ms Antoinette Braybrook, CEO of FVPLS Victoria. "The cultural strength of our communities is the key to addressing violence against our women – first and foremost our solutions and programs need secure resourcing."

"Our *Sisters Day Out*<sup>®</sup> program works because it is run by and for Aboriginal women. The Royal Commission into Family Violence highlighted it as best practice for early intervention and prevention programs for Aboriginal women."

*Sisters Day Out* is a holistic response that breaks down barriers to accessing services and raises awareness about family violence. Aboriginal women who attend *Sisters Day Out* have access to a broad range of services including counselling, legal advice, homelessness and health services. Since 2007 the *Sisters Day Out* program has reached almost 8,000 Aboriginal women across the state.

Ms Braybrook said, "The Royal Commission expressed great concern that *Sisters Day Out* has never received sustainable ongoing funding. The investment detailed in the Budget provides the Victorian Government the opportunity to address this and ensure the ongoing sustainability of FVPLS Victoria's early intervention and prevention programs."

As outlined in the Royal Commission's report, the impact of violence against Aboriginal women reverberates across the community. Government investment must ensure that all Aboriginal women in Victoria who experience family violence can access our culturally safe legal assistance services.

The Budget includes a commitment to establish 17 service hubs and specialist family violence navigators across Victoria. These initiatives align with FVPLS Victoria's long standing vision for a Koori Women's Hub with a holistic wrap around service model currently in the early implementation phase at FVPLS Victoria's head office.

"The Koori Women's Hub will be an entry point for Aboriginal women to access services and cultural activities. The Hub has been a vision of the organisation since its inception in 2002, it is informed by consultation with Aboriginal women and is the first of its kind in Victoria. The Hub is a community-led initiative that the Victorian Government should invest in," said Ms Braybrook.

FVPLS Victoria looks forward to working with the Government on the co-design and implementation of responses to the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

*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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