

# Media Release

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## **Aboriginal women's advocate Antoinette Braybrook recognised as inaugural international gender justice champion**



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

FVPLS Victoria CEO Antoinette Braybrook has been recognised as an inaugural international gender justice champion for her tireless work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who are victims/survivors of family violence.

The honour, announced in New York today by Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, is in recognition of Ms Braybrook's lifelong advocacy ensuring the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are visible.

"Family violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women has reached epidemic levels in Australia," said Ms Braybrook. "Despite the shockingly disproportionate rates of family violence, our women remain the most legally disadvantaged group in the country."

Ms Braybrook has been the CEO of FVPLS Victoria since its inception 15 years ago. She has also held the position of National Convenor of the National Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services Forum for the last 5 years.

"On a daily basis, our organisation works with Aboriginal women who have been failed by the system," said Ms Braybrook. "Our women often turn away from mainstream services because they don't feel safe. They are not believed by the police. They are judged and disrespected. They are too scared to report violence; fearful their children will be taken away."

"Antoinette is a formidable advocate for our women. Her tireless campaign to increase the visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experiences is leaving a lasting legacy" said Marion Hansen, Chairperson of FVPLS Victoria.

"She is a trailblazer, influencing systemic change within the justice system that is improving the safety of Aboriginal women and their children. Life for the next generation of Aboriginal women will be different because of her," said Ms Hansen.

"I'm very proud and humbled to accept this honour. But, the recognition really belongs to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in our communities," said Ms Braybrook. "Our women are strong and courageous. We are the leaders, role models and nurturers in our community."

In 2018, the theme for NAIDOC Week will be *Because of her, we can!* and will celebrate the invaluable contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made – and continue to make – to our communities, our families, our rich history and to our nation.

"While there has been some progress to amplify the voices and visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, so much more remains to be done," said Ms Braybrook. "Empowering and giving a voice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is the first major step towards reducing the scourge of family violence that we experience."

The Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice is launching the Gender Justice Legacy Wall to coincide with the 15th anniversary this year of the International Criminal Court and the 20th anniversary next year of the adoption of the Rome Statute. The Legacy Wall honours and celebrates survivors, advocates, judges, prosecutors and others who have contributed to the field of international gender justice.

The Gender Justice Legacy Wall will be housed in the new International Criminal Court building as an installation and unveiled during the 20th anniversary activities at the Court in 2018. Further information about the Gender Justice Legacy Wall is available at <http://4genderjustice.org/gender-justice-legacy-wall/>.

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