

# 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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 6 March 2015

## **Family Violence Prevention Legal Services: Award for service excellence**

The Australian Centre for Leadership for Women has awarded Antoinette Braybrook the 2015 Sustaining Women's Empowerment in Communities and Organisations Award in the category: Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women in a Community or Organisation.

Antoinette Braybrook is the CEO of Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Victoria and the Convenor of the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services. Presented on the eve of International Women's Day, this award highlights the importance of recognising and celebrating the empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Ms Braybrook's award is in recognition of her work ensuring excellence of operational service delivery through frontline legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors of family violence for over 12 years.

'I thank the Australian Centre for Leadership for Women and the distinguished panel of judges for this honour', said Ms Braybrook. 'It is important to remember that this is not about me as an individual. This is about the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are too often invisible in public debate. It is about the devastating and disproportionate impacts of family violence in our lives. It is about our strength and resilience. It is essential that our women's voices are heard and that they are heard on their own terms.'

Since 2002, Ms Braybrook has worked to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim/survivors of family violence across Victoria. The service is not gender exclusive, but 93% of FVPLS Victoria's clients are women. As National Convenor, Ms Braybrook, who represents 13 Family Violence Prevention Legal Services nationally, has been calling for the reinstatement of the national program since it was defunded last year, and for recognition of the distinctive rights and voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

'We have worked very hard to ensure that policy makers can harness our expertise to better inform their decisions and to ensure the safety of our women and children,' said Ms Braybrook. 'They have listened; I'm not 110% sure they've heard. But I am hopeful. I am especially encouraged by the news this week that every single one of our Family Violence Prevention Legal Services have successfully secured their current funding for at least one more year through a competitive process under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.'

Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised and almost 10 times more likely to be killed as a result of violent assault. NFVPLS continues its call on all levels of Government to make secure long-term commitments to frontline family violence services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

FVPLSs provides critical frontline legal and non-legal support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence, in areas including intervention orders, victims of crime assistance, child protection and family law. FVPLSs also undertake early intervention and prevention activities.

**Media Contact: Antoinette Braybrook, National FVPLS Convenor (03) 9244 3333**

<http://www.nationalfvpls.org/>

Media Release