



**NATIONAL
FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION
AND LEGAL SERVICES
FORUM**

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Sector calls for real change following review of National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service (FVPLS) sector's national peak body has today welcomed the Productivity Commission's recommendation that government must genuinely commit to shared decision making with Aboriginal communities across Australia, following its review of government progress in achieving the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services Forum (the Forum) Chief Executive Officer Kerry Staines said, "The Forum calls on Government to accept the recommendations put forth by the Productivity Commission today and commit to real change."

The final report of the Commission's first three-yearly review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap makes four recommendations to government: share power; recognise and support Indigenous Data Sovereignty; fundamentally rethink mainstream government systems and culture; and implement stronger accountability.

"These recommendations lay bare the challenges to service delivery that the FVPLS sector has consistently voiced," Ms Staines said.

"Under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments agreed to four priority reforms that change the way Government works to accelerate improvements in the lives of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This includes committing to shared decision making and working in partnership with communities to build the community-controlled sector," she said.

"However, the Commission's review found evidence of failures by governments to relinquish power and the persistence of 'government knows best' thinking. The Forum echoes comments by the Commission that sharing power with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make decisions about our communities lies at the heart of what governments must commit to.

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“The service providers of the FVPLS sector are experts in best-practice strategies to prevent, intervene, support healing and recovery from family and domestic violence in First Nations communities across Australia. With decades of experience in the provision of culturally safe, trauma informed and client centric integrated legal and non-legal supports, the FVPLS units are best placed to deliver holistic services that are localised and responsive to community need.

We are community-controlled and grounded by community connections and welcome the opportunity to meet with Ministers to share our priorities and expertise.”

-ENDS-

For further information and media enquiries:

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About the NFVPLS Forum

The National Family Violence Prevention & Legal Services Forum (NFVPLS Forum) was established in May 2012 and is the National Peak Body for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) around Australia that provide culturally safe and holistic services to First Nations people affected by family violence – predominantly women and children.

The NFVPLS Forum provides expert national policy advice in areas of policy, planning and law reform, and advocates for safety and justice for First Nations people affected by family violence.

<https://nationalfvpls.org/>

