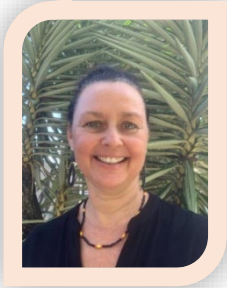




## Member's Newsletter: April 2024

### From the CEO's Desk



Hi everyone, and welcome to the second issue of our monthly Member's Newsletter. I hope that you find these informative and that each edition keeps you up to date with the Forum's activities.

Wynetta is on leave as we prepare this month's Newsletter, so we wish her a very restful break. As you are all aware, I had a great two-week vacation last month with the Forum team continuing business as usual in my absence. While I was away, Priya headed to Canberra to start our back bench campaign, which is designed to educate and inform all MPs of the work of FVPLS services and what is on the horizon for our sector.

In the past few weeks, we have also welcomed Marlo Slavin to the role of Sector Development, Member Engagement. While we are currently prioritising her tasks for the coming months, one project that is high on her priority list is working on a workforce strategy to support the vacancy rates across FVPLS. We have heard from most members that recruitment and retention are a real challenge, coming in as the second highest priority (after increase funding and investment to meet demand) and challenge for members. To further her work in this space, Marlo will be contacting you all to discuss this topic, along with introducing herself over the coming weeks.

Also high on the Forum's agenda this year will be site visits by Wynetta and myself. We have placed holds in our calendars for site visits, with the first ones expected to occur mid-year in the NT, WA, SA, and SEQ. We will make contact with all the details as the dates draw closer. In the meantime, please feel free to pick up the phone to myself or one of the team if you are looking for some support.

Have a great month.

- *Kerry Staines, CEO*

### Latest News, Policies, Submissions

#### Canberra meetings with MPs & the next steps

A trip to Canberra last month to meet with various MPs was productive, raising the profile of the Forum and our member services. During the four-day visit we met with:

- Mary Doyle MP, Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP, Libby Corker MP, Joanne Ryan MP, and Josh Burns' Chief of Staff.
- All meetings were met very productive, and MPs expressed support for the services provided by the members, with an undertaking to inform relevant Ministers of their support for our services.

#### Crimes Amendment (Strengthening the Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Violence) Bill 2024

The Policy Team made a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on March 22 re: the *Crimes Amendment (Strengthening the Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Violence) Bill 2024*. Our submission, which you can access [here](#), covered the following key points:



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- The Bill supports Target 13 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and acts on recommendations 52, 53, 56, and 61 from the 2017 Royal Commission's Final Report on Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It also contributes to the objectives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023-2026, the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030, specifically under Theme 2 of the First National Action Plan.
- The focus of the amendments rightly considers sexual violence and prescribes legislative mechanisms in consideration of this.
- However, it is noted in the submission that the circumstances and experience of violence encountered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is unique, and amendments must reflect this. The submission highlights considerations in respect of this.

### Lived Experience

As discussed at the last members meeting, there are groups being set up to provide advice on systems, processes etc from the service user point of view, now termed "lived experience". Last year, NOUS spent time with some of our members documenting the FVPLS journey, outcomes and data, and included in this consultation was how FVPLS' incorporate feedback from those who have accessed your services into the process of improving your practice. It would be great to have a more in-depth conversation with members at the next members meeting to hear your thoughts on "lived experience" and what is happening in your area. I will add this to our next meeting agenda for discussion.

Relevant resources:

- [Women's Agenda.](#)
- [From DFSV Commission, they have appointed a new National Lived Experience Advisory Council.](#)
- [What Victoria is doing.](#)
- [What New South Wales is doing.](#)

### Further information on 500 FV worker allocations

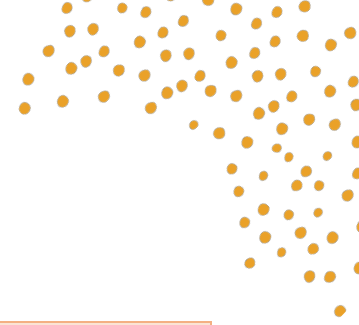
The Labor government has committed \$169 million over four years to employ 500 frontline service and community workers to support people experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. The government proposed to add 200 workers a year in the 12 months to June 2023 and June 2024, and 100 the following year.

To date, each state has a varying distribution of workers:

- NSW: 148.8 workers allocated, a closed tender process for specialist DV services
  - No ACCO's ring fenced at this stage just LGBTQIA + ring fenced
- WA: has no stats given
- ACT: 7.6 people of 500
  - Money was absorbed to contracts, were not aware they were given funding for workers
- Victoria: 101 workers; 5 for ACCOS
  - Went through a process to negotiated higher level than originally offered now have 59 level-5 and 42 level-3s
- TAS: 25 workers all at level 6; already implemented this last year to specialist DV services
- QLD: 111 workers, just announced on Monday, allocated first to sexual violence workers
- SA: 36 workers, but no communication about if that will be tendered or not
- Left for WA/NT: 70.6 workers



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### **Data Collection**

The Forum recently put the call out to understand unmet demand on FVPLS's, and the results highlighted that as a peak, the Forum is in need of some base line statistics to aid in our lobbying and advocacy. Building from the work that NOUS completed last year, along with some data collection, we have started to build a picture on a few key areas, including:

- Staffing numbers and levels for each service
- Geographical coverage
- Remote communities being serviced.

The Forum's next steps are to gather some more detail over the coming months to provide a national picture. Here at the Forum, we are working on how best to gather information from services without adding too much additional burden. We will come back to with some suggestions soon, and after the reporting templates have been finalised.

### **Alcohol Roundtable**

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) held a parliamentary roundtable discussion on the newly released book [Learning from 50 years of Aboriginal Alcohol Programs: Beating the Grog in Australia](#). *Learning from 50 years of Aboriginal Alcohol Programs* is a book about actions taken to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm in Aboriginal communities in Australia, with evidence successful of initiatives undertaken by Aboriginal communities or organisations themselves. The session involved a presentation by the book authors: Nicole Hewlett, a proud Palawa woman with demonstrated knowledge translation experience in a range of Closing the Gap policy areas including maternal use of alcohol, tobacco and other substance; and Peter D'Abbs, a sociologist with an extensive research background in alcohol and other drug policy and program evaluation. Ms. June Oscar AO, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, who wrote the foreword for the book also spoke.

### **Policy Group**

The NFVPLS Forum would like to establish a Policy Officer Community of Practice, and we're reaching out to all services to nominate Policy team members who would benefit from participating. We know that everyone is busy so initially we are proposing a bi-monthly Teams meeting to:

- Share ideas and develop best practice principles for Policy development.
- Discuss the latest statistics, policies and frameworks that support the sector.
- Share tools, templates, and examples of Policy submissions to build our capability.

Feel free to share this email with your Policy staff and please have them contact [Priya](#) or [Jenn](#) by 19 April 2024 if they would like to get involved.

### **Comms Conference in Canberra – sponsored spots still available!**

So far, we have filled five sponsored spots to attend [The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Public Sector Comms Week Conference](#), which is scheduled for June 18-20 in Canberra, and we have room for more! Bookings close May 31 so please nominate one Communications staff member from your service to take up the sponsorship to attend the conference, along with Lianne Brown the Forum's Communications Officer. The Forum will pay for their attendance, with each service to invoice the Forum for travel costs. Contact [Lianne](#) or [Kari](#) for more information.



## Member Spotlight



**NAAFLS**  
NORTH AUSTRALIAN  
ABORIGINAL FAMILY  
LEGAL SERVICE

W: <https://naafls.com.au/>

**1. How many staff does your service have, and what role do they each play?**

NAAFLS currently has a team of 27 staff working within legal, casework, administration, and leadership roles. Our legal and case worker teams work collaboratively together to ensure provision of a culturally safe and holistic service to our clients.

**2. What locations does your service support?**

We have offices in Darwin (Larrakia land), Katherine (Jawoyn, Dagoman and Wardaman land) and Nhulunbuy (Yolŋu land), and service over 40 remote communities within the Top End region spanning from the Tiwi Islands down to Lajamanu, Wadeye across to Borroloola.

**3. How would you describe the service that you offer to your communities?**

We provide culturally sensitive legal advice, assistance, representation, and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Top End communities who have experienced domestic, family, and sexual violence.

**4. Tell me about a program that your service offers that you are particularly proud of.**

NAAFLS has a dedicated Community Legal Education (CLE) Officer who develops and delivers relevant educational materials to our communities and stakeholders. The CLE Officer regularly presents to new NT Police Recruits, Aboriginal Women's Services, Community Housing Groups, and other community services to ensure they are fully aware of what NAAFLS provides. Our CLE materials include educational videos outlining our services and basic information about DVO's and Family Law, which are translated into five of the main language groups spoken in the Top End.

**5. If you had one wish for the clients that you support, what would it be?**

To empower our communities with everyone understanding their rights, feeling safe and having access to justice.

**6. What motivates you and your team to deliver your services?**

NAAFLS is the only victim-based Aboriginal legal service in remote communities in the Top End region of the NT. Our team is passionate about making a difference to the lives of Aboriginal families. We are in a unique position to make positive change and advocate to work towards better outcomes for our clients and communities.



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AND LEGAL SERVICES  
FORUM**



## Out and About



We had a great few days in Meanjin, Brisbane recently, meeting with colleagues across the specialist Domestic and Family Violence sector for the national meeting of peaks, networks and services.

Gathering in person to collaborate and strategise on what actions we can take as a collective to influence and have the greatest impact towards reducing the occurrence of domestic and family violence on our families and our communities, really is time well spent.

## Important dates

- **Upcoming Member's meetings**
  - Thursday, 2 May 2024 at 2:30pm – 4pm AEST
  - Thursday, 30 May 2024 at 2:30pm – 4pm AEST
- **NFVPLS Forum Member's conference + AGM**
  - 15 to 17 October 2024; location in South Australia
- **Member speaking engagements & conferences**
  - Kathleen Wincen, AFLSQ (who will be speaking on the first day of the conference) & Melissa Calliss, Warra Warra Legal Service speaking at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Disrupting & Reducing Family Violence against First Nations Women and Children Conference; 8-9 May 2024 in Gadigal Land, Sydney
  - QIFVLS Overcoming Indigenous Family Violence Forum, 28-29 May 2024, plus 30 May 2024 as on-country workshop day; Cairns, QLD