

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Thursday, 2 May, 2024**

### **Major gap in State Government 'major Budget boost' for family and domestic violence**

Aboriginal Family Legal Service (AFLS) has today expressed serious concern over the chronic underfunding of Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) in Western Australia, in light of the Cook Labor Government's announcement of an additional \$96.4 million for family and domestic violence support, with no dedicated funding for the FVPLS units.

AFLS A/CEO, Gail Dodd, said that the State Government's failure to tangibly invest in the safety of Aboriginal women reflected the systemic discrimination that traumatises and revictimizes Aboriginal women, children and families every day.

"There is nothing in this announcement to support the FVPLS units in Western Australia to ensure the ongoing sustainability of culturally safe, trauma informed, best practice service delivery for Aboriginal victims of family violence and sexual assault.

Premier Cook says the System Reform Plan was developed through extensive consultation with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector; where, then, are the reform initiatives that reflect our ongoing advocacy for culturally safe legal assistance for Aboriginal women and children victims?"

AFLS emphasised that Aboriginal women continue to be overrepresented as victims of family and domestic violence, and that it is their safety and wellbeing that suffers when Government fails to adequately invest in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver services to highly vulnerable Aboriginal people.

"Aboriginal women are 11 times more likely to die from family violence than non-Aboriginal women. We can't keep waiting for this rate to increase. We need more from this Government. We need adequate investments to make tangible impacts to the lives and the safety of our communities."

AFLS noted the State Government's grant funding of \$5.75 million for Aboriginal and community-led initiatives, and raised further concerns around the two-year time frame of the grants program.

"While we welcome dedicated investments into Aboriginal family safety, 2-year funding is a band aid response to a pervasive health and welfare problem."

AFLS encouraged the State Government to work closely and genuinely with the FVPLS units to ensure the adequacy and longevity of funding which is critical to improving safety outcomes for Aboriginal families and building stronger communities.