

Hopes pampered sisters will reduce family violence

By MATT COUGHLAN

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PAMPERED: Hazel McDonald, Alinta Cruz and Kira Benson at enjoy a Sisters Day Out workshop at Horsham Golf Club on Tuesday. The workshop aimed to celebrate Aboriginal culture and brought Aboriginal women together for a day of pampering including hairdressing, massage and manicures. Picture: PAUL CARRACHER

ABOUT 70 indigenous women enjoyed a day of pampering at the Horsham Golf Club on Tuesday as part of a program to put a stop to family violence.

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The Sisters Day Out is run by Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria, an organisation which aims to support aboriginal victims and survivors of family violence.

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria project worker Kelly Faldon said the program creates a safe and welcoming place for women to talk about issues and seek support.

"Sisters Day Out is an early intervention program that reduces family violence through building resilience and self-esteem among aboriginal women," she said.

"Essentially what it does is allow us to take our service to women, because often in our communities there's a great reluctance to disclose family violence."

Tuesdays activities included massages, hairdressing and manicures.

"Apart from the pampering we also invited regional-based agencies," Ms Faldon said.

She said indigenous women were vastly over represented in family violence statistics.

"In comparison with non-aboriginal women, we are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised and 10 times more likely to die as a result of family violence," she said.

"In Victoria, reports of family violence by aboriginal women have almost tripled over the past five years."

It was the first Sisters Day Out in the Wimmera since 2008.

Ms Faldon said the organisation was keen to come back to the region, but its return would be dependent on funding.