



UN Human Rights Council 41st Session

High Rates of Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women must be addressed

By Antoinette Braybrook

Mr President,

I am an Aboriginal woman. My family is Kuku Yalanji.

Thank you Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women for bringing attention to violence against women.

Australia holds itself out as a diverse and thriving country committed to human rights and equality. But when it comes to violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women we are staring down an epidemic - a national crisis.

Our women are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised because of family violence and 10 times more likely to die from violent assault than other women. 90% of violence against our women goes unreported. Our women fear the very system that is meant to protect. System violence and racism are still very much alive in our country today.

Our National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services that work with women and children have not received any increase in our core funding from the Australian government for six years, nor have we received a CPI in that time.

Every woman every mother and her children must have access to culturally safe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled services for their safety and well-being.

I call on the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and the Human Rights Council to remind the Australian Government of its human rights obligation to combat and prevent gender-based violence and ensure that our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children are seen as a national priority.

We must have a dedicated National Action Plan to address violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

We must have an investment and long-term commitment to culturally safe specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services, who are working at the frontline and delivering successful early intervention and prevention programs. The investment must allow for expansion of our services to ensure greater geographical coverage across all areas - urban, rural and remote.

Australian governments must act now before more Women's lives are lost and before more communities are devastated and families destroyed

Thank you.

Geneva, 1 July 2019

*This is the extended version of Djirra's positions on this issue. Due to time limitations, the oral presentation to the Human Rights Council was an abridged version of the above. Watch the video for the shortened version.