

## MEDIA RELEASE

From Djirra

For immediate release, Thursday 19 September 2019



### Djirra welcomes additional funding for its work with Aboriginal women

*Today, Corrections Minister Ben Carroll announced additional funding for Djirra to expand its work with Aboriginal women who are at risk of imprisonment, in prison and released.*

On Thursday morning, Djirra welcomed Victorian Minister for Corrections the Hon. Ben Carroll's announcement of \$1.46 million in additional funding over four years which will support Djirra's culturally safe and specialist wrap-around legal and support services for Aboriginal women.

'We take today's announcement as testament of the vital and unique work we do at Djirra to break the cycle of family violence and women imprisonment,' Djirra CEO Antoinette Braybrook said. 'This additional funding shows a commitment and a step forward to change the story for Aboriginal women in Victoria.'

Djirra is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation which provides culturally safe and holistic support and specialist family violence legal assistance and representation for Aboriginal women who currently experience, or have in the past lived with, family violence or sexual assault.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are the fastest growing prison population in our country. 80% of Aboriginal women in prisons are mothers. In Victoria, Corrections data shows that the number of our women entering prison on remand increased by 155% in the 5 years between 2012 to 2017.

Antoinette Braybrook said that, just last week, Djirra's team visited Dame Phyllis Frost Centre to deliver their Sisters Day In workshop to 53 of the 90 Aboriginal women inside. 'These numbers, while increasing and while devastating, are still manageable. With the right investment, we can turn this around,' furthered Antoinette. 'Investing in Djirra's programs and services is a step in the right direction.'

Referring to the overrepresentation of Aboriginal women in prison and the alarming increase of their incarceration rates in the country, Braybrook regretted that the Minister's portfolios align with the lives of too many Aboriginal women and intersect with too much of Djirra's work. Braybrook also said that, fortunately, the Minister's commitment to support Djirra's work shows that we are heading in the right direction.

Data shows that, overwhelmingly, Aboriginal women are imprisoned for non-violent offences related to homelessness and poverty. Family violence is both a cause and consequence of Aboriginal women imprisonment.



‘Djirra means business. When it comes to Aboriginal women’s safety and resilience, Djirra will continue its advocacy to secure further investment into community controlled organisations, into our self- determination, to ensure that our solutions are invested in,’ concluded Braybrook.

--- end ---

**Media contacts:**

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact:

Carole Sarasa, Marketing & Communications Advisor, 0428 112 356,  
mcadvisor@djirra.org.au

On Friday, Nick Toonen, General Manager, 0418 457 120, ntoonen@djirra.org.au

**About Djirra**

Established in 2002, Djirra is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation based in Abbotsford (VIC) with state-wide reach through its 7 regional offices. Djirra is dedicated to assisting Aboriginal people who are experiencing family violence or have in the past – predominantly women and children.

We provide culturally safe and holistic legal and non-legal support to Aboriginal women and Aboriginal victims/survivors of family violence, including sexual assault: frontline legal assistance, wrap-around support through our Koori Women’s Place, outreach and specialist support programs to women in prison, and a range of early intervention prevention programs. Protecting and promoting Aboriginal women’s wellbeing and safety is our core business.

**About Antoinette Braybrook**

Antoinette Braybrook is an Aboriginal woman who was born in Victoria on Wurundjeri country. Antoinette’s grandfather and mother’s line is through the Kuku Yalanji, North Queensland.

Antoinette has been the CEO of Djirra since the service was established in 2002. In addition to Antoinette’s leadership in Victoria, she has held the elected position of National Convenor of the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum (National FVPLS Forum), the peak body for the 14 FVPLSs throughout Australia, since 2012.

Antoinette was awarded the 2015 Law Institute of Victoria: Access to Justice/Pro Bono Award, the 2017 Inspirational Women of Yarra Award, a 2015 Australian Centre for Leadership for Women award for Sustaining Women’s Empowerment, and the Future Justice Prize 2018.

Follow us on Twitter @DjirraVic