



Sharing stories, finding solutions

## Aboriginal Women's Self-Determination in Action

# Djirra's Advocacy Priorities

## 1. The Organisation: **Djirra**

For over 20 years, Djirra has been walking together with Aboriginal women on their individual journeys to safety and wellbeing. Djirra provides specialist family violence legal services and wraparound, holistic supports, including case management and cultural and early intervention and prevention programs.

Djirra is Aboriginal-led, our self-determined solutions are designed by Aboriginal women for Aboriginal women.

Our advocacy priorities are grounded in a simple truth: when Aboriginal women are safe, our children, families and communities thrive.

## 2. The Issues: **Why we do what we do**

Aboriginal women are not failing systems - systems are failing Aboriginal women.

Key facts from Victoria and nationally:

- **Aboriginal women are 45 times more likely** to experience family violence than non Aboriginal women in Victoria.
- **Family violence is present in 85%** of child protection cases involving Aboriginal children in Victoria.
- **Aboriginal children are 15.6 times more likely** to be removed from their families; for children aged 5-9, this rises to **29 times**.
- **Over 10% of Aboriginal children in Victoria are in out of home care**, the highest rate in the country (105.9 per 1,000).
- **Aboriginal women are 15 times more likely to be imprisoned** than non Aboriginal women; **56% are held on remand**, often without sentence.
- **70-90% of Aboriginal women in prison are survivors of violence or abuse**, and **80% are mothers**.
- In Djirra's legal service, **about 2 in 3 Aboriginal women experience violence from non-Aboriginal men**.

These outcomes are not inevitable - they are the result of policy choices.



# Aboriginal women have the solutions.

# Aboriginal women deserve better.

## 3. The Solutions: What we're advocating for

### A. Invest in Djirra's Aboriginal Women's Centre

Djirra is seeking sustained investment to establish Victoria's first Aboriginal Women's Centre - a culturally strong, Aboriginal-led place where women and children can access safety, justice, healing and community.

This vision is informed by:

- More than 20 years of frontline experience prioritising Aboriginal women's safety in Victoria and nationally.
- Listening to, believing and investing in Aboriginal women's self determination.
- A commitment to culturally strong, Aboriginal-led solutions, where culture, connection and healing are central to safety.
- International First Nations evidence gathered through a Churchill Fellowship undertaken by Djirra's CEO, Antoinette Braybrook AM.
- Formal endorsement through the Yoorrook Justice Commission, which has recommended the establishment of Aboriginal Women's Centres.

Our Aboriginal Women's Centre is Djirra's long standing vision and a long overdue investment in what we know works.

### B. Invest in Djirra's Regional Expansion

Djirra's vision is clear: No Aboriginal woman should have to travel more than 100 kilometres or one hour to access safety for herself and her children.

Sustained investment will enable:

- Equitable access to Djirra's specialist legal assistance, case management and counselling - services proven to save lives.
- Expanded access to early intervention and prevention programs and cultural and wellbeing workshops, including *Koori Women's Place*, *Sisters Day Out*, *Dilly Bag* and *Young Luv*.
- The building and retention of a strong Aboriginal-led regional workforce, recognising that workforce stability is essential to cultural safety, staff wellbeing and consistent high quality service delivery.

Where Aboriginal women live should never determine whether they are safe.

### C. Establish and Fund Djirra's Child Protection Notification and Referral System

For more than a decade, Djirra has called for a Child Protection Notification and Referral System (CPNRS) in Victoria.

This is Djirra's self-determined solution to ensure Aboriginal women are immediately referred to culturally safe legal advocacy and wraparound support when Child Protection becomes involved.

Sustained investment will enable:

- Automatic referral of Aboriginal women to Djirra at the earliest point of Child Protection involvement.
- Immediate access to specialist legal advocacy for Aboriginal mothers affected by family violence.
- Prevention of child removal, by supporting women to safely escape violence with their children.
- Implementation of Yoorrook Justice Commission Recommendation 12.

Early intervention and prevention keeps families together and prevents lifelong harm.

### D. End the Unjust Criminalisation and Incarceration of Aboriginal Women

Aboriginal women are one of the fastest growing prison populations in Australia - not because of increased offending, but because of systems that punish and blame, racism, misidentification and punitive laws.

Djirra is calling for:

- An end to misidentification and racialised policing that criminalises Aboriginal women instead of supporting them for their safety.
- A halt to punitive laws that disproportionately impact Aboriginal women and lead to child removal.
- Accountability across justice responses, so Aboriginal women are believed and supported, not punished for violence committed against them.
- Sustainable investment in wraparound services, including early intervention and prevention, and cultural programs that support Aboriginal women's safety, cultural strength and wellbeing.

Criminalising Aboriginal women entrenches harm. It does not create safety.

## 4. The Action: **Support us.** **Learn about us.**

Scan to stand with Aboriginal women  
- and invest in solutions that work.



### **Support Djirra's life changing work**

Donate to support Aboriginal-led safety, justice and healing.



### **Learn more about us**

Explore Djirra's work and impact.



### **Evidence & accountability**

Read the Churchill Report by Djirra's CEO Antoinette Braybrook AM, which is a deep dive into Djirra's long standing vision to establish the first Aboriginal Women's Centre in Victoria.

**Djirra is Aboriginal women's self-determination in action. Aboriginal women have the solutions, and we have been clear about what keeps us safe.**

The question is whether governments, funders and institutions are ready to listen - and invest. We need everyone to walk with us.



1800 DJIRRA

[www.djirra.org.au](http://www.djirra.org.au)

 DjirraVIC

Sharing stories, finding solutions