

To 'Balance the Scales' Justice for Sexual Violence Must Occur Beyond the Courtroom

Date: 8 March 2026

Note to Editors: The contents of this press release can be used as quotes attributable to Full Stop Australia CEO, Karen Bevan.

This International Women's Day '[balancing the scales](#)' for women and girls impacted by sexual violence will take more than courtroom reform. Our advocacy for investment in trauma-specialist counselling, culturally safe care and justice system navigators, recognises that the path to justice should be one of healing and recovery, rather than survival.

"The devastating reality is that most victim-survivors of sexual violence never experience 'justice' through the courts." said CEO Karen Bevan

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are three times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be subject to sexual assault. This is compounded by racism and systems failure. It is essential that support systems are designed by the lived expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to create better access to culturally safe response, healing and recovery.

UN Women Australia's IWD theme highlights the *"urgent need to ensure fair, inclusive and accessible justice"*. True justice extends beyond the criminal system and requires governments to address the sexual violence crisis with commensurate investment.

The 2025 Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) Inquiry into Justice System Responses to Sexual Violence demonstrates what Full Stop Australia and sexual assault services across the country have known for decades— the legal system continues to fail victim-survivors by design. Citing the need to *'diminish barriers to engagement, increase accessibility and address diverse needs'*, the report's first recommendation calls to fund specialist-led justice navigator programs for every survivor of sexual violence.

In 2025-26 Full Stop Australia made a pre-budget submission to the NSW Government seeking \$4.7 million over two years to fund a pilot for a comprehensive, victim-centric Sexual Violence Justice Navigator (SVJN) program operated by our specialist team at the NSW Sexual Violence Helpline. Full Stop Australia's trusted relationship with victim-survivors, and commitment to recovery and healing would provide the foundations for the psychological safety allowing survivors to meaningfully engage with the legal system in the first place.

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Putting a **Full Stop** to sexual, domestic and family violence.



"If victim-survivors are truly expected to proceed through the justice system, in all it's difficulty, we cannot expect them to do that alone." said CEO Karen Bevan.

The ALRC supports justice system navigators, but the program being rolled out nationally through the Attorney General's Department does not deliver the comprehensive, holistic response Full Stop Australia has called for.

We continue to advocate for a specialist program in NSW (and across the country) that provides an expert sexual violence response and holistic approaches to meet the individual needs of victim-survivors.

Full Stop Australia is seeking a \$1 million-dollar annual increase in funding for the NSW Sexual Violence Helpline in the upcoming NSW state budget to help us reach out proactively to more victim-survivors of sexual violence. We also support the calls by Domestic Violence NSW for a 50% baseline increase in funding for frontline domestic violence services in NSW.

Anyone in NSW impacted by sexual violence can access 24/7, free and confidential trauma-specialist counselling by calling the NSW Sexual Violence Helpline on 1800 424 017 or webchat with our counsellors at nswsexualviolence.fullstop.org.au.

Anyone in Australia impacted by sexual, domestic and family violence can access 24/7, free and confidential trauma-specialist counselling is available by calling 1800 FULL STOP (1800 385 578) or webchat with our counsellors at fullstop.org.au.

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