

MEDIA RELEASE

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AMSANT response to ABC TV Four Corners program on murdered and missing Aboriginal women

AMSANT today expressed deep concern about the crisis of murdered and missing Aboriginal women in Australia, documented in the recent ABC TV Four Corners program 'How many more?'

AMSANT Chief Executive Officer, Dr John Paterson, said: "I know that the level of concern and despair that we feel is shared by very many people across the nation.

"Our hearts go out to the families and loved ones of those First Nations women who have suffered unimaginable deaths at the hands of perpetrators. We express to them our deepest condolences and respects.

"The individual and collective trauma that accompanies the wholly unacceptable violence against Aboriginal women is made all the more painful by our knowledge of the institutional racism that helps to fuel this epidemic.

"The policing and justice systems must be accountable for their actions in failing to protect Aboriginal women by not taking their pleas for help seriously.

"Their systems must be reformed to recognise and respond to the danger signals and to provide culturally safe responses to Aboriginal women reporting domestic violence.

"Importantly, we must elevate the voices of Aboriginal women in this space, including through strong mechanisms for Aboriginal governance. We already have great examples of inspiring leadership being shown, for example, from Aunty June Oscar through the *Wiyi Yani U Thangani* (Women's Voices) project:

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are calling for all Australian governments to significantly refocus and invest in early intervention and prevention support. They want a system grounded in their self-determination and underpinned by healing and restorative approaches, aimed at supporting individuals and families, while also improving the conditions, and transforming the context in which people live".

"We must listen to their voices", Dr Paterson concluded.

Media comment: Dr John Paterson, 0418 904 727.