

Umalek Balit

(Give Strength, in Woiwurrung)

What is Umalek Balit?

Umalek Balit is a culturally safe and relevant program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who come to specific Magistrates' Court locations for family violence related proceedings. It offers support, information and referrals to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families about:

- Family violence intervention orders
- Family violence related criminal matters
- Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT)

The Koori Family Violence Practitioners

Umalek Balit has two Koori Family Violence (KfV) Practitioners who have specialist cultural and family violence knowledge.

- A **Koori Women's** Family Violence Practitioner
- A **Koori Men's** Family Violence Practitioner

The Koori Family Violence Practitioners can help with keeping the family safe from more family violence by:

- explaining the court process (but cannot give legal advice)
- assessing dynamic risk
- safety planning
- referring to family violence, legal, court or other relevant services
- supporting the safety of Koori families through contested hearings
- arranging for the right court support.

How to get support from Umalek Balit and the KfV Practitioners?

Umalek Balit can give support if you:

- 1 are an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person;
- 2 are a non-Aboriginal partner or family member of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person;
- 3 have Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children; and
- 4 are accessing the specific Magistrates' Court locations for family violence related proceedings.

To find out if you can access Umalek Balit services for support before, during and/or after court contact your local court or the Koori Family Violence Unit: csv.kfv@courts.vic.gov.au.

The Koori Men's or Koori Women's Family Violence Practitioner are available **9am and 5pm Monday to Friday**.

Police, registry staff, magistrates and community organisations can make referrals to Umalek Balit. This means that a Koori Family Violence Practitioner might contact you or your family to offer support and information.

Why do we have Umalek Balit?

The aim of Umalek Balit is to enable the court to provide a more culturally safe response to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in family violence proceedings by:

- Building the court's knowledge of Koori people, histories and cultures and understandings of the dynamics of family violence in Koori communities;
- Providing culturally appropriate support, information and referral services to Koori peoples at court;
- Improving the court's capacity to engage with Koori respondents in family violence matters including providing referrals to appropriate support services; and
- Increasing the Koori community's confidence in the courts and justice system more broadly.

Umalek Balit has been co-designed in partnership with key Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to ensure the service is culturally safe and responds to the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander court users in Victoria.



General Enquiries

For general information about Umalek Balit contact the Koori Family Violence Team.

Phone: (03) 7004 9779
Email: csv.kfv@courts.vic.gov.au

Artwork by **Cassie Leatham** Taungurung/Wurundjeri artist
Artwork title: **Overcoming Obstacles**

This work represents the nurturing hands surrounding a community to help overcome struggles and domestic violence situations. The footprints represent moving forward, taking steps for a brighter future; while the yarning circles bring new growth, beginnings and strength. There are mountains to overcome in life, and rivers and rocks to build upon one's self-esteem. The sun, giver of life, has beams of light and warmth to help heal wounds that sooth the spirit and soul. We are guided by the stars and our ancestors' spirits.