



MEDIA RELEASE

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NACLC supports calls for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Targets

The National Association of Community Legal Centres Inc. (NACLC) supports calls made by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) and the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples for the Prime Minister to show leadership in honouring his government's commitments to establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Targets.

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise only about 2.5 per cent of the Australian population, they make up 26 per cent of the total prison population, and that the imprisonment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is 14.3 times higher than that of non-Indigenous people¹.

'Clearly this figure is unacceptable and Australia must do much better than this, so NACLC supports the call for the establishment of these Justice Targets as part of the Closing the Gap Strategy' said Michael Smith, NACLC National Convenor.

'NACLC also believes that a key mechanism to support these Justice Targets is to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equitable access to culturally appropriate and adequately funded legal services.

'NACLC recognises the unique roles undertaken by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and the Family Violence Prevention Legal Services as specialist and culturally appropriate legal service providers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,' concluded Mr Smith.

'They can and do also play a vital role in working with communities in preventative strategies that can keep people, especially young people, out of the criminal justice system.'

Ends

For further information or to arrange an interview contact Communications Manager Te Raehira Wihapi 02 9264 9595

¹ 4517.0 – Prisoners in Australia, 2009: Imprisonment rates, Australian Bureau of Statistics