

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**For immediate release**

NATSILS says UPR provides an important opportunity to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment rates

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, Australia will appear before the Human Rights Council in Geneva for its Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Australia's UPR is an important opportunity for countries in the UN system to question Australia about its human rights record and make recommendations for improvement.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) hopes that the UPR will place a spotlight on the issue of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system.

"By any measure the overrepresentation in the criminal justice system has reached a crisis point and needs to be addressed urgently. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are currently imprisoned at over 13x the rate of non-Indigenous Australians" Chairperson of NATSILS, Shane Duffy said.

"Let me be clear, this is the one of the most pressing human rights challenges facing Australia. Of particular concern, is the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth stuck in the criminal justice system. Unless something changes we will lose a generation of our young people at enormous cost to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities."

Mr Duffy said, "If we are going to address this issue we need a holistic approach and Federal Government leadership. We urge the Australian government to engage fully with the UPR and implement recommendations related to addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment rates. This must be done with full consultation and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and their representatives."

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