



NATSILS

**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL & TORRES
STRAIT ISLANDER LEGAL SERVICES**

MEDIA RELEASE

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NATSILS welcomes the reversal of funding cuts

Today, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) welcomed the announcement by the Attorney-General's Department that the announced funding cuts to the legal assistance sector have been reversed.

NATSILS Chairperson, Shane Duffy, said, "We are thrilled to have received the news that the Abbott government has taken the responsible step of reversing the announced cuts to legal assistance services."

"The services provided by our members are absolutely critical to assisting the most vulnerable members of society and we are very pleased that the government has recognised the value of these services."

"The announcement means that we can get on with what we do best, which is providing culturally competent legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities."

"However, while the announcement today is welcomed, the government also needs to know that the funding provided is not enough to meet the legal needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Productivity Commission's recent report said \$200 million more was required just to address urgent need and we call upon the government to take heed of this recommendation."

"I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the organisations that have supported NATSILS in arguing with us for a reversal of these cuts."

"It has only been because the value of our services has been championed by so many that the government has been forced to take notice."

Mr Duffy said that he had been overwhelmed by the support that NATSILS and the ATSILS had received from so many organisations within the legal and community service sectors.

"The commitment and belief in the value of our services by these organisations has been greatly appreciated. These organisations have shown leadership in recognising that the provision of legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people is essential to addressing their disproportionately negative outcomes and their access to justice."

"We are absolutely delighted that we, and our partner organisations, will be able to continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with the family, civil and criminal services they need. This is a great result for society's most disadvantaged and the justice system as a whole."

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