



**NATSILS**

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

19 August 2016

## Media Release

### **NATSILS calls for independent oversight following new reports of abuse in Queensland youth detention centres**

Amnesty International, as well as the ABC's 7.30 Report and Lateline programs have uncovered significant reports of abuse in two youth correctional institutions in Queensland, following a Freedom of Information request where they obtained access to thousands of pages of documents.

"It is evident that the incidents in the Northern Territory are not isolated", said Ms Cheryl Axleby, Co-Chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS), the peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services.

"There are an increasing number of reports of young Aboriginal people suffering whilst in institutional care. Young people must be in an environment that is safe, nurturing and consistent with expectations about responsibility. The use of force must be reduced immediately"

"NATSILS is deeply concerned that the reports portray a litany of systemic abuses, including the use of dogs, solitary confinement, and that those children who frequently attempt self-harm and suicide, are met with unnecessary or excessive use of force"

NATSILS calls for the ratification of United Nations' Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) and independent oversight to ensure transparency and accountability within each and every jurisdiction. Further, NATSILS calls for the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommendations to be implemented.

"It is appalling that 25 years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody tabled its report that many of the recommendations have not been implemented. It is the responsibility of all Governments to engage in direct action to implement the recommendations of the RCIADIC", Ms Axleby concluded.

**Media Contact:** Chris O'Neill at [coneill@vals.org.au](mailto:coneill@vals.org.au) or by phone on 0478 794 518.