



NATSILS

National Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Legal Services

TRUE JUSTICE FOR OUR PEOPLE

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Legal experts warn new NT Government’s punitive agenda will backfire and increase crime

The peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services has congratulated the incoming Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro for the Country Liberal Party’s clear victory, but warned that she is already on a path to make crime worse in the Northern Territory.

“The new Chief Minister has been elected on a platform to reduce crime but her punitive agenda will do the exact opposite,” Karly Warner, Chair of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) said.

“Law and order posturing about punishment, power and control has never worked before and it won’t work now.

“If the stated agenda of the new government proceeds, it will backfire. Chief Minister Finocchiaro will preside over a more dangerous Northern Territory in the months and years ahead.

“The responsibility of governments is to do everything possible to prevent crime, not look tough in response.

“We are extremely concerned that the proven programs that actually work to keep young people engaged in the community and prevent crime, which have never been properly supported or funded anyway, will now be even further deprioritised.

“Putting 10-year-old children in jail, bringing back spit hoods and increasing incarceration won’t stop crime – it will perpetuate the cycle of trauma, violence and government neglect that led us here in the first place. We need to support young people, and their families and communities, not harm them.

“Keeping kids locked up leads to horrific outcomes not only for them, but for their communities and families. Instead, we need early intervention and diversionary programs led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations.

“Our sincere hope and appeal to Chief Minister Finocchiaro is for the new government to pause, sit down with us and local communities and properly understand the things that increase crime, and what can be done to prevent crime, before locking up our children and creating a more dangerous Northern Territory.” Ms Warner said.

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