



**NATSILS**

National Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander Legal Services

TRUE JUSTICE FOR OUR PEOPLE

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **PM glosses over child incarceration crisis – not good enough**

**Friday 13 February 2026**

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) says the Federal Government's failure to acknowledge the mass incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in yesterday's annual Closing the Gap update is not good enough.

Nerita Waight, Acting Chair of NATSILS, says while the Federal Government is focussed on the need to continue conversations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are tired of talking without any meaningful action.

"We need decisive action and leadership from the Prime Minister to address Closing the Gap failures – something that he should not shy away from and instead work with us directly to improve.

"There are levers to pull in terms of the funding agreements with states and territories that will drive real policy change and improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and especially our children – we just need the Prime Minister to have the guts to stand up for us.

"Just last week, the [Australian Institute of Criminology released findings](#) of how state and territories' restrictive bail laws are putting more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people behind bars.

"Our communities are severely over-policed and impacted by structural discrimination and disadvantage. More and more people are languishing in police watch-houses, court cells and prisons before having their day in court – including people who ultimately won't receive a prison sentence.

"The current approach is not making communities safer – harmful laws that incarcerate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and children as young as 10 do the exact opposite.

"We need real investment in therapeutic supports and community-led solutions that prevent interaction with the justice system in the first place, which will make our communities safe.

"We are calling on the Prime Minister to step up and call a national summit on youth justice so we can make meaningful progress in Closing the Gap, not just gloss over the worsening incarceration gap," says Ms Waight.

**ENDS**

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