



**NATSILS**

National Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander Legal Services

TRUE JUSTICE FOR OUR PEOPLE

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **PM's UN pitch celebrating Aboriginal culture hypocritical as he presides over youth justice crisis at home**

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The Prime Minister's [pitch video](#) for the United Nations (UN) Security Council is a shameless display of hypocrisy, using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture for PR while a crisis unfolds at home, says the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS).

The video opens with a shot of Uluru and the words "We listen. We partner. We protect," before Senator Malarndirri McCarthy speaks in language. It is being used as part of the Prime Minister's bid for Australia to join the UN Security Council.

"The Prime Minister is using Aboriginal people and culture for PR when he is presiding over the mass incarceration of Aboriginal people and children," says Wayne Nannup, Deputy Chair of NATSILS.

"Our children are being locked up at unprecedented rates across the country. The Prime Minister has refused to meet with us to talk about this escalating crisis, and continues to shirk his responsibility to do anything about it.

"To then see the Prime Minister use our culture, our language and our continuous connection to land in a video today to pursue his own interests is gut-wrenching.

"One the UN's very own committees, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination handed down a scathing statement earlier this year on the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Australian so-called justice system, and said it has grave concerns over the policies of state and territory governments in youth justice.

"The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention" also stated "shock" about the extremely young ages from which children in Australia may be detained, in violation of fundamental human rights norms," says Mr Nannup

In April this year NATSILS penned an open letter to the Prime Minister calling on him to act to end the youth justice crisis that is seeing Aboriginal children locked up at growing rates, as state and territory governments continue to pursue increasingly punitive policies.

“Our open letter was signed by more than 200 organisations and leaders and almost 2,000 individuals. The Prime Minister has so far refused to meet with us to discuss this,” Mr Nannup says.

“Just last week a Senate Inquiry into Youth Incarceration backed our calls for the Prime Minister to act, after hearing from hundreds of experts across the country about the youth justice crisis that is seeing our children locked up.

“Instead of busying himself with PR, the Prime Minister should make time to meet with us and actually take action to prevent our children from landing behind bars and to make the community safe,” Mr Nannup says.

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