

## Media Release

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### **A Human Rights Act for Queensland is powerful medicine for advancing and protecting the rights of vulnerable Queenslanders.**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (QLD) LTD (ATSILS) commends the Palaszczuk Government for their steadfast commitment to advancing human rights protections for all Queenslanders with the introduction of a human rights bill in parliament today.

ATSILS CEO Shane Duffy said, “This is an historic day for all Queenslanders, especially the most vulnerable in our communities, and the importance of the legislative protection of human rights is the critical foundation needed to progress towards a fairer and more equitable Queensland.”

We represent many vulnerable people in diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the State who have for too long been disadvantaged by poor policies and laws that entrench poverty, perpetuate discrimination and fuel the ongoing over-representation of our people in the justice system.”

ATSILS looks forward to seeing the positive impact this legislation will have on strengthening human rights protections for individuals – particularly society’s most vulnerable. We especially welcome the much needed protections related to the cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the economic, social and cultural rights to education and healthcare contained in the bill.

“Having human rights protections enshrined in law will be a real litmus test for addressing elements in this cycle of disadvantage and discrimination that our clients, their families and other vulnerable groups in communities experience daily,” Mr Duffy said.

ATSILS strongly endorses the introduction of a human rights charter in Queensland. This is in many respects a defining moment that has the clear potential to make for better outcomes and a fairer Queensland. A human rights instrument will see enhanced protections and rights for all Queenslanders and is particularly significant for the most vulnerable who often do not have the financial resources to enforce their human rights by way of legal representation and advocacy.

ATSILS looks forward to continuing the positive dialogue with the Palaszczuk Government and key stakeholders now and into the future as Queensland positions itself to lead the country in human rights protections.

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