

## Media Release

Date: 03/04/2019

**Morrison's LNP Government commits funding to ensure critical access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is maintained.**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (QLD) Ltd (ATSILS) welcomes news out of the federal budget announcement last night that indicates planned cuts to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) funding have been overturned.

ATSILS CEO Shane Duffy said, “this announcement provides welcomed certainty to vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people needing culturally safe legal assistance services delivered by a community-controlled service such as ATSILS.”

The announcement indicates Commonwealth funding for ATSILS will now be rolled out through a Single National Mechanism via the Queensland State Government from July 2020.

“Our preference is for direct standalone funding provided to ATSILS by the Commonwealth Attorney General’s Department. Under the announced new Single National Mechanism arrangement ATSILS funds will be quarantined for two years, after that the future of specific funds provided to ATSILS remains a mystery.”

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services are critical to the effective functioning of the legal system and ensuring access to justice for one of the most vulnerable groups in society. We have an extremely positive working relationship with the Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Yvette D’Ath and look forward to further dialogue with the Attorney to discuss what the future may look like for our services. Not knowing what the future may look like in relation to specific ATSILS funding is a huge concern.

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