

## Media Release

Date: Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2015

### **TOGETHER: We Can Put an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland.**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (QLD) Ltd (ATSILS) welcomes the announcement by Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk that the Queensland Government will implement all 140 recommendations in the landmark report *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland*.

ATSILS Chief Executive Officer Shane Duffy said, "The rate in which Queenslanders are experiencing domestic and family violence is unacceptable and we welcome the government's strong response to this significant human rights issue."

The report states that the number of domestic violence incidents reported to Queensland Police rose from 58,000 in 2011-12 to 66,000 in 2013-14. This equates to more than 180 incidents every day, an alarming indication of the scope the problem we face. For marginalised groups within the community such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the statistics are even more devastating.

Mr Duffy said "Within the communities we service the issue of domestic and family violence is exceedingly critical. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of violence and are 15 times more likely to seek support from homelessness services."

Past trauma is a core driver of violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and for other situational factors that contribute to violence and crime, including poverty, unemployment, drug and alcohol use, and poor health.

"Long term, the rates of domestic and family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities cannot be curtailed unless we see more investment in resources and strategies that address the underlying drivers of crime and violence" Mr Duffy said.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need better access to housing, education, health and social services in order to overcome disadvantage. During the refinement phase of the draft Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy, ATSILS welcomes the opportunity to provide input and engage with the government in designing long term solutions to the crisis. Solutions based on intervention, prevention and diversion strategies which form the basis of a justice reinvestment approach ATSILS has been advocating for.

This approach will facilitate the development of smarter, evidence-based and more cost-effective solutions that, increase safety, address the root causes of violence against women and children, cut reoffending and imprisonment rates, and ultimately build stronger communities.

A strong coordinated approach inclusive of all sections of the community is required and ATSILS is committed to working together with the government and all Queenslanders to drive cultural change and end the violence.

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