

**30 April 2019**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Australian Greens Access to Justice announcement commits significant increased funding for legal assistance and to retaining a stand-alone Commonwealth funding program for ATSILS**

The National Peak Body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (**NATSILS**) welcomes the Access to Justice policy from the Australian Greens announced on Saturday.

“We welcome the support of the Australian Greens to retain the Indigenous Legal Assistance Program, the only dedicated national program designed to end the disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the justice system”, said NATSILS Co-Chair, Cheryl Axleby.

“We applaud the Green’s policy which recognises significant unmet legal need affecting First Nations people and other marginalised groups and sets out a plan to properly resource legal assistance services to meet that demand”, said Cheryl.

Over the next four years, the Australian Greens’ plan for justice includes:

- \$408 million for Community Legal Centres
- \$299 million for Legal Aid Commissions
- \$97 million for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services
- \$118 million for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services
- \$16 million for Environmental Defenders Offices
- \$16 million for legal assistance peak bodies

The Australian Greens Access to Justice policy recognises the extent of unmet legal need is unknown and allocates \$8.5 million over the forward estimates for a national survey of legal need.

“NATSILS has continued to call on the government to comprehensively map unmet legal need of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the national survey is a great step”, said Cheryl.

“We welcome the investment in legal assistance peak bodies, including NATSILS. As the peak body for the ATSILS, the NATSILS plays a critical role in providing national coordination, strategic leadership and capacity building to ensure that our members benefit from a nationally coordinated network of service providers”, concluded Cheryl.

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Background:

NATSILS 2019-20 Pre-Budget Submission can be found [here](#).