



For immediate release
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MEDIA RELEASE

Funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services – more needs to be done

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services North Queensland welcomed the Queensland Attorney General, Yvette D'Ath announcement yesterday that \$3.4 million has been allocated to their community legal centre for the 2020-2025 period.

The certainty of five-year funding will ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services North Queensland can continue to provide free legal services to women in Townsville, Palm Island and other regional and remote areas of North Queensland.

The five-year funding certainty is an essential, but the COVID-19 health crisis has meant that an increased number of local women have been contacting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services North Queensland to help them with family and domestic violence issues.

Cathy Pereira, Co-ordinator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services North Queensland said, 'Women have been coming to our centre in increased numbers due to the COVID-19. The funding will go partway to meeting the needs of these women but will fall short of addressing the increased needs we are seeing.'

'It is also disappointing that we were the only one of the four specific Aboriginal Torres Strait Island legal services that received funding to provide services exclusively to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people. With the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities closed during the COVID-19 health crisis, legal need in these communities will grow.'

'I have seen it time and again when a woman doesn't receive the legal help in a prompt, professional and holistic manner, associated social and legal issues often worsen. This includes complications with family law matters such as arrangements for children, the involvement of child protection agencies, increased risk of homelessness and housing instability, workplace issues and job loss.'

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Mission Statement

ATSIWLSNQ Mission is to provide and improve access to legal services and promote law reform for North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women through advocacy and representation in the legal system.

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