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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### NACLC welcomes funding for National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS)

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) welcomes the news that the peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) will receive ongoing funding from the Commonwealth Government.

NATSILS (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services) was going to have to close at the end of June.

“This is great news for NATSILS and the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities they assist and support. It represents an acknowledgement by the Government of their great legal expertise and the vital work they do and in providing a voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in relation to the justice system,” said Michael Smith, Chair of NACLC.

“The funding announcement comes at a time where such long-term commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and organisations is vital to address the major challenges these communities face, as highlighted in the recent *Close the Gap Progress and Priorities Report*. In real terms it also provides certainty for NATSILS and will allow them to plan strategically and concentrate on their leadership role,” continued Mr Smith.

“While welcoming the news that NATSILS will be funded, NACLC renews calls on all levels of Government to commit the additional \$200 million per year identified in the recent Productivity Commission Report as being required to adequately fund legal assistance services in Australia” concluded Mr Smith.

For further information or to arrange an interview contact NACLC Chairperson Michael Smith 0421 437 883

*NACLC acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands across Australia and particularly the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, traditional owners of the land on which the NACLC office is situated. We pay deep respect to Elders past and present.*