

## MEDIA RELEASE



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### **Justice Targets are needed for action on Aboriginal jobs and education.**

ANTaR supports the calls made today by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) and the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples for the Governments of Australia to adopt Justice Targets.

"Justice Targets to reduce the rates of incarceration and contribute to safer communities are essential to the Government's ability to deliver on its agenda for education and workforce participation." ANTaR President, Dr Peter Lewis said today.

Across Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 15 times more likely to be in prison than other Australians and are much more likely to be victims of crime. The situation is even bleaker for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, who are 22 times more likely to be in detention than other Australian children.

Dr Lewis said that the Abbott Government has a commitment to improving Aboriginal education and employment, but the continued high rates of incarceration are a major barrier to achieving it.

"We won't give Aboriginal children a good education while they are 25 times more likely to be incarcerated than other Australian children."

"Justice Targets must be an essential element to creating safer communities and should form part of the Closing the Gap Strategy"

It is a significant omission that the Safer Communities building block is the only area of the Closing the Gap Strategy that does not have targets or a partnership agreement – this omission must be addressed says Dr Peter Lewis.

Last year, prior to the election there was bipartisan support for the adoption of justice targets to reduce this over-representation and to support safer communities. Dr Peter Lewis said that "Now is not the time to step back from this commitment".

We urge the government to develop justice specific Closing the Gap targets to reduce imprisonment and reduce victimisation together and in genuine consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ANTaR is a national advocacy organisation dedicated specifically to the rights – and to overcoming the disadvantage - of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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