

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**Time for all sides of politics to come together on what First Peoples are calling for on justice**

ANTaR, national advocacy organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights, today called on all sides of politics to listen and act on what First Peoples have called for on justice.

The call comes after the Opposition Leader Bill Shorten delivered a speech in Melbourne last night outlining the Labor Party's approach to justice, including committing to setting targets to close the justice gap.

National Director Andrew Meehan said that this is something that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had been calling for for years, and is a welcome commitment from the Opposition Leader.

He said that the Opposition Leader's commitments to closing the justice gap by setting targets, putting this on the COAG agenda, supporting new approaches such as justice reinvestment, and improving data were all very positive.

"What's needed now is for all parties and levels of government to work together through a nationally coordinated approach to this issue – States, Territories and the Federal Government," said Mr Meehan

"Australian governments should draw on the spirit of the COAG Closing the Gap Commitments in 2008, and set a destination to address the crisis, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"This is not about any political party or level of government, it's about acting together through a national approach on what First Peoples have called for," he said.

Mr Meehan noted that the crisis of over-imprisonment and high rates of violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has become one of the most widely researched and understood issues.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are being locked up at around 13 times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians, and there has been an 88% increase in the last 10 years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence compared with non-Indigenous women.

"Report after report after report highlights the crisis that is leaving a generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people behind. The frightening reality is that we're going backwards on this as a nation.

"No government should need more reason than that to act," he said.

*ANTaR is a member of the Change the Record Campaign and the only non - Indigenous organisation dedicated solely to supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and speaking up for justice, rights and respect for Australia's First Peoples.*

The Change the Record Campaign has two overarching goals: Close the gap in rates of imprisonment by 2040; and Cut the disproportionate rates of violence to at least close the gap by 2040 with priority strategies for women and children.