MEDIA RELEASE

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Government must heed the calls of the Productivity Commission and Social Justice Commissioner reports and act on incarceration rates

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights advocacy organisation ANTaR today called on government to act on unacceptable incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

National Director Andrew Meehan said that there had been report after report highlighting the urgent need to address incarceration, and government couldn't bury its head in the sand on the issue.

The Productivity Commission's *Access to Justice Report* and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner's *Social Justice and Native Title Report* were both released last week.

Mr Meehan said "These reports make it absolutely clear that government must act to address the over incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

He said that "Only last month the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* (OID) Report showed that the adult imprisonment rate had increased 57 per cent between 2000 and 2013."

"The OID Report also showed that juvenile detention rates increased sharply between 2000-01 and 2007-08, and remain around 24 times the rate for non-Indigenous youth," he said.

"With Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being locked up at 14 times the rate of other Australians, it's crystal clear that we have an incarceration crisis on our hands," he said.

"Government must listen to the Social Justice Commissioner and act on his recommendations to introduce justice targets and support justice reinvestment approaches," He said.

Mr Meehan also highlighted the need to ensure proper resourcing of vital Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services.

"With a crisis of this nature on our hands such services are critical to access for justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples," Mr Meehan said.

ANTaR is the only non-Indigenous organisation dedicated solely to supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and working to educate the wider community, shape public opinion, and speak up for justice, rights and respect for Australia's First Peoples.

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