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Law Council welcomes ALP's First Nations justice funding package

The Law Council of Australia has welcomed the ALP's proposed \$107 million package to address systemic disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the justice system.

Law Council President, Arthur Moses SC, said the package represented a significant step forward in addressing access to justice challenges experienced by First Nations people but more needed to be done.

"The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, women and children in our justice system is not just alarming – it is a national disgrace," Mr Moses said.

"The ALP's package is a much-needed funding boost. Importantly, it also focuses on creating change through justice reinvestment programs and the inclusion of Closing the Gap justice targets."

The package includes a funding boost of \$40 million over four years to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS); \$21.75 million over four years for justice reinvestment programs; and \$60 million for First Nations family violence services. The ALP also committed to working with states and territories to adopt COAG's Closing the Gap justice target frameworks.

"The Law Council's [Justice Project Final Report](#) highlighted the dire state of access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and included a raft of recommendations to help resolve significant barriers to justice," Mr Moses said.

"These included a focus on justice reinvestment, increased legal assistance funding, adoption of Closing the Gap targets, early intervention and prevention strategies and the adoption of community-led culturally appropriate services for First Nations people.

"While the Law Council welcomes the ALP's announcement, we will hold them to account if they are elected to government to ensure it is implemented without delay. We also must remember that much more needs to be done to address increasing levels of disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"To this end, we look forward to working with all sides of politics including the coalition to address this national tragedy and ensure justice for all Australians. Justice for First Nations Peoples should never be a partisan issue. This only creates division and our leaders need to ensure that this does not happen."

The Law Council also welcomed the ALP's announcement of a proposed \$660 million family violence package, which would boost funding for early intervention, frontline services and emergency accommodation and legal services.

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