



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Support for Black Lives Matter today and every day

Community Legal Centres Australia (CLCs Australia) supports the Black Lives Matter demonstrations organised in different locations across Australia today. We support the call for end to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in custody in Australia, while supporting the call for justice for First Nations and Black people in the United States of America and internationally.

Governments in Victoria and New South Wales are implementing measures to restrict the ability of people to attend the peaceful protests which have been planned. The New South Wales Supreme Court has decided that the event planned for Sydney is an unauthorised public assembly.

“We are in the midst of an historical moment where the brutal and unjustified police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis has sparked an international movement for racial justice and an end to discriminatory policies, continued destruction of Country and sacred sites and police violence against Indigenous and Black communities. Now, more than ever, it is important to speak out and we stand with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) and their calls for an end to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in custody in Australia,” said Nassim Arrage, CEO of CLCs Australia.

“These events have been unfolding during National Reconciliation week the theme for this year being *In this together*. Our focus at this time should be working together to address historic and current injustices to further the national journey to a fully reconciled country. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have made it clear that they intend to demonstrate today and we stand together with everyone who chooses to do so.”

“In circumstances where it is likely that people to choose to attend demonstrations today, we are saddened that some State governments and their police are choosing a course of action which locks out a practical approach to working to organisers to make the protest safe for people to attend. Instead it establishes a concerning scenario where peaceful protestors exercising their democratic rights can be criminalised, where the criminalisation of Indigenous and Black lives is at the heart of the issue. We call for practical and sensible policing today.”

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be safe from institutional racism and state violence. In a week where we have seen the destruction of a 42 000 year old sacred site and distressing footage of a young Aboriginal man in Sydney, we call for justice and an end to the ongoing racial discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There have been 434 black deaths in custody in Australia since the Royal Commission almost 30 years ago. As a starting point, we want our governments to take this issue more seriously and commit resources to implement law and policies that will put an end to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in custody.”

ENDS

Further information or interviews

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Note to Editors

CLCs Australia is the national peak body for the community legal sector. We are an independent, non-profit organisation established to ensure a thriving sector that can provide free and accessible legal and related services to everyday people, including people experiencing discrimination and disadvantage.

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