



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Legal assistance sector slams Federal Government decision to take money away from local indigenous group**

**15<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

Community Legal Centres Tasmania today slammed a decision by the Federal Government to remove all funding from the local Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service and give it to its Victorian equivalent.

Jane Hutchison the Chair of CLC Tas stated:

We strongly support the principle that local aboriginal organisations should be responsible for advocating on behalf of their people. The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service has no expertise in working with Tasmanian Aborigines or Tasmanian law and if they are required to fly down to do their work this will only increase the expense to the taxpayer.

The Federal Government's cuts to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service follow on from significant cuts to the legal assistance sector more generally, with the Environmental Defender's Office having lost all of their funding two years ago and other Community Legal Centres expected to lose 30 per cent of their funding over the next three years.

Ms Hutchison said:

If this Government cared about access to justice it would adopt the recommendations of the Productivity Commission that found that two hundred million dollars of extra investment in the legal assistance sector was required. Instead, the Federal Government has cut all funding to the Environmental Defender's Office, is cutting 30 per cent from community legal centres over the next three years and now expects a Victorian organisation to deliver services to Tasmanian Aboriginals.

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