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Press Release

Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Service Welcome New Court Scheme to Deal with Domestic Violence in Tasmania

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Service has welcomed the introduction of a new court scheme to deal with domestic violence in Tasmania.

Northern Practice Manager, Lisa Coulson said, "The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania has got it right by setting up a holistic service combining legal representation with social work assistance. That is exactly the model used by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service before we were defunded by the Commonwealth Attorney General, Senator George Brandis. Our legal aid scheme was accused of funding too much civil work rather than totally criminal case work. In fact, we were responding to the needs of our community for representation in areas such as domestic violence which made up a large part of our civil case load."

Ms Coulson also welcomed the intention of the new court scheme to work with those who commit domestic violence offences; "Our work with Aboriginal offenders and prisoners convinces us that it's worth putting in the effort to try to change the violent behaviour which causes such chaos in our families. While the protection of women and children always come first, Aboriginal offenders are also part of our community. We have been shattered to see that the new arrangements for Aboriginal legal aid in this State have left so many people without decent legal and referral systems and we hope this new Legal Aid scheme will fill that gap".

Lisa Coulson
Northern Practice Manager
Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Service
21 November 2016