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Our Ref: RBGMM1290375

Direct Line: 9926 0216

30 March 2009

The Hon. John Hatzistergos, MLC
Attorney General for NSW
Level 33, Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Attorney General,

Re: Funding for Aboriginal Legal Service Hotline

The Law Society's Juvenile Justice Committee (Committee) has asked that I write to you in relation to the funding of the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) hotline.

Pursuant to Regulation 33 of the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Regulation 2005 (NSW)* all Aboriginal people who are taken into police custody are legally entitled to speak immediately to a lawyer from the ALS. Police are required to call the ALS whenever an Aboriginal person is taken into custody.

In order to comply with Regulation 33 the ALS hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Although Regulation 33 is a State imposed rule, the NSW Government does not provide any funding for the hotline.

The ALS hotline receives between 200 and 300 calls a week and was a recommendation of the 1991 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. As you will be aware, Aboriginal people make up only 2% of the general population of NSW yet constitute 21% of the male prison population and 31% of the female prison population.

The Committee is concerned that NSW Police will not be able to comply with Regulation 33 if the hotline ceases to exist once Federal Government funding runs out in September 2009.

The Committee urges the NSW Government to provide appropriate funding for the ALS hotline so that the ALS can continue to provide an essential service for Aboriginal people in custody.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph Catanzariti
President





Our Ref: RBGMM1290813

Direct Line: 9926 0216

30 March 2009

The Hon Robert McClland MP
Attorney-General
House of Representatives
Parliament House
PO Box 6022
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Attorney-General,

Re: Funding for Aboriginal Legal Service Hotline

The Law Society's Juvenile Justice Committee (Committee) has asked that I write to you in relation to the funding of the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) hotline.

Pursuant to Regulation 33 of the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Regulation 2005 (NSW)* all Aboriginal people who are taken into police custody are legally entitled to speak immediately to a lawyer from the ALS. Police are required to call the ALS whenever an Aboriginal person is taken into custody.

In order to comply with Regulation 33 the ALS hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The ALS hotline receives between 200 and 300 calls a week and was a recommendation of the 1991 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. As you will be aware, Aboriginal people make up only 2% of the general population of NSW yet constitute 21% of the male prison population and 31% of the female prison population.

The Committee is concerned that the hotline will cease to exist once the Government's one-off funding granted in June 2008 runs out in September 2009.

The Committee urges the Government to continue to provide appropriate funding for the ALS hotline so that the ALS can continue to provide an essential service for Aboriginal people in custody.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph Catanzariti
President



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