

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Group: 2

Program: 1.5

Question No. AE15/111

Senator Wright asked the following written question from the 24 February and 27 March 2015 hearings:

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) is essential to allow ongoing coordination of ATSILS reporting and is a key partner in the Australian Legal Assistance Forum.

- a. Please provide a breakdown of the current Commonwealth funding for NATSILS.
- b. Please confirm how much Commonwealth funding for NATSILS has been cut since the 2013-14 Federal Budget.
- c. On what basis were these funding cuts excluded from the Attorney General's reversal of funding cuts to the legal assistance sector announced on 26 March 2015?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

- a. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) received \$295,000 in 2013-14 and \$295,000 in 2014-15 under the Indigenous Legal Assistance Programme.
- b-c. No Indigenous legal assistance provider, including NATSILS, has received a funding cut since the 2013-14 Budget. Current funding levels will remain until 30 June 2015.

The 2013 MYEFO decision reduced programme funds from 2015-16 onwards. The Government will restore funding of \$11.5 million to the Indigenous legal assistance programme over two years.

The distribution of funds beyond this financial year, including arrangements for NATSILS, is being considered by government.