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MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS**

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ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICES

The Rudd Government has allocated more than \$6.3 million in one-off funding for Aboriginal Legal Services (ALS) which will help them meet extra demand for legal assistance.

Indigenous Australians remain one of the most disadvantaged groups in Australia and experience high rates of contact with the legal system.

This will allow providers to purchase properties in regional and remote areas to help them attract and retain staff.

In Western Australia for example, the average rental for a property in Karratha or Port Hedland is more than \$1,000 a week and in some locations, rental properties are only available to people employed in the mining industry.

The funding will provide:

- \$2.75 million for the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia
- \$515,000 to Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW and ACT)
- \$800,000 to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (Queensland South)
- \$895,000 for South Australia's Aboriginal Legal Movement
- \$140,000 for computer upgrades and
- \$900,000 for the Expensive Indigenous Cases Fund which allows any legal service to apply for extra funds for expensive or high profile cases.

This is the second lot of one-off funding announced by the Rudd Government. In April, an extra \$5 million was allocated which demonstrates the Government's commitment to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

The Government knows that providers are facing heavy demand for their services and recognises the role they play in providing legal advice and representing Aboriginal defendants.

Today's announcement takes total funding for the operation of Aboriginal Legal Services for 2007-2008 to more than \$64 million.

Media Contact: Samantha Wills 0448721372

Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600 • Telephone: (02) 6277 7290 • Facsimile: (02) 6273 7098
www.ministerhomeaffairs.gov.au