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One year on, Government fails to respond to ALRC's Indigenous over-incarceration report

The Federal Government's failure to respond to the Australian Law Reform Commission's (ALRC) [Pathways to Justice report](#) is disappointing and demonstrates a lack of appreciation as to the difficulties faced by generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, which we are all responsible for as a nation.

The comprehensive report into the incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was released a year ago today, highlighting stark over-representation in prison populations and providing recommendations as to how to tackle the issue.

Despite the Federal Government commissioning the report, [calls for a response](#) on the report and its extensive recommendations have been met with silence. This is despite the ALRC Report's inclusion of several recommendations aimed at the Commonwealth, indicating that much work needs to be undertaken at the federal level.

Law Council President, Arthur Moses SC, said the Government's apparent indifference was troubling and demonstrated a failure to understand that Aboriginal-led solutions are essential and effective. This was a fundamental truth recognised in the ALRC report.

"*Pathways to Justice* painted a grim picture of the national tragedy that is overwhelmingly high Indigenous incarceration rates, but it also offered practical law reform processes that can help us turn the tide," Mr Moses said.

"The lack of Government action also demonstrates a lack of respect for the ALRC, which exists to help ensure Australian law reform is good reform. Ignoring this report is an affront to the arduous work that went into it. The fact is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are the most incarcerated people on Earth, which is a national disgrace and international embarrassment."

Mr Moses has reiterated calls for Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to respond to the report and to implement its recommendations as a matter of urgency.

"This report provides real, tangible recommendations that the government has had the chance to consider and implement. Unfortunately, the Government's silence is deafening. It is compounded by other governments' failures to act. Only last week the Northern Territory Parliament passed an Act which strips away key safeguards to protect children which were recommended by the Northern Territory Royal Commission into Protection and Detention of Children," Mr Moses said.

"[The Law Council's Justice Project](#) also highlighted the disadvantage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face in the criminal justice system, and further deserves a response. The time for change is now – the world is watching."

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