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***Media Release***

**INDIGENOUS LAW CENTRE VOWS TO CONTINUE DESPITE FUNDING CUTS**

Australia's only Indigenous law research centre at UNSW is calling for community support following the Federal Government's decision to cut all funding to the Centre.

The Indigenous Law Centre (ILC)—which publishes the Indigenous Law Bulletin (ILB) and the Australian Indigenous Law Review (AILR)—has been in continuous operation since 1981. The funding, from the Federal Attorney General's Department, pays the wages of editors and other staff members, journal publication costs and public events such as its Open Forums. Until now the ILC has received funding from successive Australian governments.

ILC Director, Professor Megan Davis, says the need for quality research on Indigenous legal matters has never been greater.

"There are many people—including those in the government and public service—who rely on our research and journal publications to inform policies and programs that directly impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples," she says.

"The legal issues affecting Indigenous communities are increasingly complex and part of our role is to explain the complexities of these laws in a way the community can easily understand.

"The ILB and AILR are the only journals of their kind in Australia—indeed they are among the few Indigenous law journals anywhere in the world. We are strongly committed to ensuring they continue to be published."

Professor Davis is also calling on ILC supporters and community members, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to help ensure the survival of the Centre.

"There are many ways the community can offer support to the ILC," she says.

"From making a donation to writing a letter to your local member as to why you think the ILC is important, each action will form part of a much bigger plan to enable the Centre continue its important work."

The ILC continues to receive in-kind support from the UNSW Law School in the form of office space and the voluntary contributions of academic staff. The Centre is working with the faculty to seek private funding to replace the Government funding it has lost.

“While we were disappointed to learn that our funding had been cut, we will continue to lobby the government to reverse its decision,” Professor Davis says.

“The ILC and in particular the Indigenous Law Bulletin play a vital role in explaining complex legal issues to a diverse audience, many of whom have little knowledge of how the Australian legal system works.”

The origins of the ILC and the Law Bulletin go back to early 1970 when the first Aboriginal legal service was established. Emeritus Professor Garth Nettheim was the first chairman of the Unit and former Australian of the Year, Professor Mick Dodson has also been a Director.

The ILC has played an integral role in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with involvement in High Court cases such as *Mabo v Queensland* and *Koowarta v Bjelke-Peterson*, the drafting of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and constitutional recognition. It has conducted and published research on legal issues critical to closing the gap including violence against Indigenous women and children; land reform and housing issues; alcohol restrictions and child protection.

Visit: [www.ilc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.ilc.unsw.edu.au).

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