

**DAVID HARRIS MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**PAUL LYNCH MP
SHADOW ATTORNEY GENERAL**

STATEMENT ON ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY

It was revealed today in Budget Estimates that a second Aboriginal death in custody has occurred in the past week, with the death of a 44-year-old woman at the Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre. This follows the death of a 25-year-old man at Long Bay Prison.

NSW Labor is urging the Berejiklian Government to carefully consider the recommendations of the Legislative Council's Select Committee on the High Level of First Nations People in Custody and Oversight and Review of Deaths in Custody, which will be delivered on 15 April and to immediately implement initiatives such as the Walama Court.

NSW Labor says both of these deaths should be thoroughly investigated by the Coroner.

"The NSW Government must tackle the continuing high rates of Indigenous incarceration in NSW head on," said Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, David Harris.

"There are research-backed solutions which just require the necessary funding and Government commitment to keep First Nations people out of the prison system in the first place."

The Shadow Attorney General Paul Lynch said "The NSW Government could implement recommended solutions such as the Walama Court which has strong support from the NSW Bar and the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS)."

"The business case for the Walama Court was prepared by the NSW Justice Department with input from Treasury in December 2018, ahead of the March 2019 State election, but two years later the initiative remains in limbo," Mr Lynch said.

"The Government could immediately commit more funds to Justice Reinvestment which has delivered identifiable outcomes for Aboriginal communities."

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