

6 September 2024

# ASX Announcement

**Shine Justice Ltd (SHJ)**

**Northern Territory Stolen Wages Class Action – Settlement**

Shine Justice Ltd announces the Commonwealth Government has settled the class action for Stolen Wages on behalf of many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who worked in the Northern Territory and who were paid little or no wages from 1933 to 1971 while they were subject to Commonwealth wage control legislation, for up to \$202 million (including legal costs). Minnie McDonald launched the class action in 2021 on behalf of workers and surviving relatives of those who received little or no wages. She was represented by Shine Lawyers.

The settlement is subject to the approval of the Federal Court of Australia.

A copy of Shine Lawyers' press release is attached.

Authorised for release by the Managing Director & CEO



**Annette O'Hara**

Company Secretary

aohara@shine.com.au

**For more information**

Simon Morrison, Managing Director - 07 3837 9435

Ravin Raj, Chief Financial Officer - 07 3837 8449

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## Settlement for thousands of Stolen Wages workers in the Northern Territory of up to \$202 million

- The Commonwealth Government has settled the class action for Stolen Wages on behalf of many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who worked in the Northern Territory and who were paid little or no wages from 1933 to 1971, while they were subject to Commonwealth wage control legislation.
- The matter of *Minnie McDonald v Commonwealth of Australia* has settled, subject to approval of the Federal Court of Australia.
- A registration process for group members and outreach program throughout the Northern Territory will likely commence in October 2024 subject to Court orders.
- A settlement approval hearing may be held towards the end of 2024.

The Commonwealth Government has settled the class action for Stolen Wages on behalf of many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who worked in the Northern Territory and were paid little or no wages from 1933 to 1971, while they were subject to Commonwealth wage control legislation. Minnie McDonald launched the class action in 2021, on behalf of workers and surviving relatives of those who received little or no wages. She was represented by Shine Lawyers.

As part of the historic class action settlement, the Commonwealth will pay up to \$202 million to eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers or their surviving spouses and children. This amount includes up to \$15 million towards the legal costs of bringing the claim, and up to \$7 million for the costs of the administering the settlement, and associated costs.

Group members will need to be registered to be considered to receive settlement compensation. A registration process will likely commence in October 2024 subject to Court orders. As part of this, Shine Lawyers proposes to conduct an Outreach Program throughout the Northern Territory to inform group members of the settlement and to assist them with registration.

The settlement is subject to approval by the Federal Court of Australia, and it is hoped this will occur towards the end of 2024. The Court will decide the amount to be received by each eligible Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander worker or their family members who register.

### **Minnie McDonald, Lead Applicant:**

“It was hard when we were growing up. We lived in the bush and didn’t have any school. When I was young I started working on stations. I was working with my family - my father, my mother and my brothers were on the station. I later met my husband when working on stations. We had nothing and had to live on bush tucker and a bit of bread. A lot of those people we worked with are gone now. This is about all the people who were working everywhere and never got paid nothing.”

**Sarah Thomson, Shine Lawyers' Practice Leader, Class Actions, said:**

"Today is a step forward for the many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people we represent across the Northern Territory. This settlement cannot correct the past, but it acknowledges the suffering of these workers and their descendants, who have experienced disadvantage because of the Commonwealth legislation in place over many decades which controlled their wages."

"We are grateful to the lead applicant, Minnie McDonald, and the witnesses who had the courage to share their stories with the Court during the evidence preservation hearings throughout the Northern Territory last year. It is our hope that a greater understanding of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Northern Territory during the Stolen Wages era is a legacy of this class action."

"We acknowledge the Commonwealth Government's efforts in seeking to right a historical wrong and work towards reconciliation with the Northern Territory's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population through this settlement."

**Shaun Bonétt, Chairman of Litigation Lending Services (LLS) (which financially supported the class action), said:** "This landmark resolution stands as a testament to the power of justice and the resilience of the human spirit. It represents more than just compensation; it is a crucial step toward healing and reconciliation for the First Nations people of the Northern Territory. Importantly it underscores the essential role of litigation funding in enabling access to justice for those who might otherwise be silenced, and it reinforces LLS's commitment to supporting the pursuit of fairness and accountability in all corners of our democratic society."

**Media Enquiries:** Miriam Sawan 0436 666 575 [msawan@shine.com.au](mailto:msawan@shine.com.au)