

Reconciliation for Western Sydney

Incorporated

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Committee Secretary

Reconciliation for Western Sydney urges you to take action on the following points regarding the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) legislation, also called NT Intervention:

1. Immediate and unconditional reinstatement of the Racial Discrimination Act (1975). As reported in the media, non-Aboriginal people will only have their welfare payments quarantined if they are deemed to be disadvantaged whereas everyone in the 73 Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory has been deemed to be disadvantaged. Therefore discrimination will continue.
2. We accept that some people may wish to have their income quarantined to prevent humbugging; however, this must be on a voluntary basis. Where serious abuse occurs it should be handled by government agencies as is the case for non-Indigenous abuse cases.
3. Genuine consultations and negotiations must include
 - Transparent public reporting
 - Qualified unbiased interpreters
 - Unbiased facilitation where the communities' wants and needs will be heard and recorded and their own decision-making enabled and respected
 - Transcripts of sessions to be released with the communities' approval
4. Specific objective improvements in health and education (beyond enrolment) through the two and a half years of the NT Intervention should be reported statistically, not just anecdotally.
5. The removal of all signs regarding pornography and alcohol bans should occur without delay and no other signs be publicly displayed without the explicit consent of the Aboriginal communities concerned
6. Compensation under just terms where land has been compulsorily acquired, although we believe that as the land was always Aboriginal Land, the Aboriginal owners/custodians should have the right to determine what just compensation would be required.

The NTER and associated measures contravene Australia's human rights obligations under both Australian and international law, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. They clearly fail to meet the necessary requirements in order to be classed as special measures and therefore would still be in breach of the RDA, in our opinion.

Yours sincerely

Lyn Leeser
Secretary