

## STOP THE INTERVENTION COLLECTIVE BULLETIN

# LABOUR PLANS TO CONTINUE WITH FAILED INTERVENTION

Walter Shaw, President of Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs, has described the Intervention as "one of the most significant disasters in the history of interaction between Aboriginal Australia and Government since colonisation".

Despite unprecedented investment of more than \$1.5 billion, social conditions have continued to deteriorate. Most remote communities have been deemed "economically unviable" by the NT Intervention and stripped of resources and employment in an attempt to force Aboriginal people into the "mainstream".

Government statistics show incarceration rates have risen more than 20 per cent, school attendance has declined in many places, instances of suicide and self harm have increased and thousands of jobs have been lost as Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) closes down. There are growing crises in urban centres such as Alice Springs as large numbers move in from the bush.

But the Labor government has not wavered from the Intervention initiated by Howard. They have refused to fully reinstate the Racial Discrimination Act. Despite the claim of a new 'non-discriminatory' Income Management (IM) system, 94 per cent of people on the BasicsCard are still Indigenous and 75 per cent of people granted exemptions have been non-Indigenous.

Labor's response to the growing crisis in Alice Springs has been to back more punitive policing and the creation of 100 new 'work for the dole' positions, which will see Aboriginal people doing municipal work such as fencing and graffiti removal just to be paid on their BasicsCard. Minister Jenny Macklin is talking about extending draconian Intervention powers beyond their sunset clause in 2012.

### Support the growing campaign

Unions NT and the CFMEU have initiated a petition demanding backpay at award rates for Aboriginal people working for Centrelink payments, half quarantined on a 'BasicsCard'.

The petition has a particular focus on the use of 'BasicsCard' workers by the \$672 million Intervention housing program (SIHIP). While contractors like Leighton's Holdings have made millions from SIHIP, Aboriginal people working on housing renovations have been paid as little as \$6 per hour.

**Sign on at [jobswithjustice.wordpress.com](http://jobswithjustice.wordpress.com)**

**RALLY 12PM  
THURSDAY MAY 5  
70 PHILIP ST SYDNEY**

**STOP THE INTERVENTION  
JOBS WITH JUSTICE NOW**

**Join us to launch a petition at the office of Indigenous employment Minister Mark Arbib. Demand backpay for Aboriginal workers paid on the 'BasicsCard' and investment in proper jobs in all communities.**

**Speakers include:**

**Barbara Shaw (NT)**

**Rachel Siewert (Greens Senator)**

**CFMEU Representative**

*"I worked stripping paint, painting floors, removing old kitchens. I thought we were going to be getting good pay, but they kept me on the BasicsCard."*

**Marilyn Dixon  
Amoonguna**



**for more info see [www.stoptheintervention.org](http://www.stoptheintervention.org)  
[jobswithjustice.wordpress.com](http://jobswithjustice.wordpress.com)  
call Graham 0413915334 or Paddy 0415800586**

# **JOBS WITH JUSTICE CAMPAIGN UNIONS STANDING UP FOR ABORIGINAL RIGHTS**

The labour movement has played a crucial role in the campaign against the Intervention. Highlights include recent tours by Gurindji workers of Sydney building sites, wharves and delegates meetings - following in the footsteps of the Wave Hill walk-off.

The following statement was published in The Australian newspaper on October 29th 2010. Union endorsements included Unions NT, ASU (SA, NT & NSW), ANF, CFMEU, NTEU and MUA:

## **Stop the NT Intervention – Jobs with Justice for Aboriginal workers**

### **Worse than Workchoices**

The NT Intervention promised to deliver 'real jobs' for Aboriginal communities. Instead, thousands of waged jobs have been lost and Aboriginal organisations have been crippled as Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) close down.

Under the new CDEP scheme designed by the federal Labor government, Aboriginal people no longer receive wages. They are being forced to work providing vital services such as rubbish collection, school bus runs, sewerage maintenance, construction and aged care in exchange for quarantined Centrelink payments.

People are compelled to work 16 hours a week for \$115 cash, plus \$115 credit on a 'BasicsCard' which can only be used on 'priority items' in government approved stores. Aboriginal workers have described this as a return to the "ration-days" when they were paid in food instead of cash.

Centrelink is threatening to cut off payments entirely if people do not participate. Unclear guidelines and the vulnerable position of many workers have seen cases of people working 30 hrs or more for no extra money. This is far worse than anything the Liberals inflicted on workers under Workchoices.

The Labor government committed to halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in a decade. But due to a continuation of Howard era policies such as the Intervention, Indigenous unemployment has drastically worsened from 13.8% in 2007 to 18.1% in 2009.



The NT Intervention shames Australia. Despite recent amendments, the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD) ruled in August that Intervention legislation provides clear evidence of "embedded racism" against Aboriginal people. The UNCERD report said living conditions had deteriorated for Aboriginal people under the Intervention through loss of land, property, employment, legal rights and opportunities for cultural development.

Rather than abandon failed policy, the government is planning to spend \$350 million (over 4 years) to expand income management across the NT. This money is desperately needed to create real jobs in Aboriginal communities and ensure the provision of basic services.

The government must act immediately to:

- + End compulsory income management
- + End current CDEP arrangements forcing people to work for the BasicsCard
- + Turn all CDEP positions into fully waged jobs
- + Provide massive investment in job creation and service provision in all Aboriginal communities.

## **COME ALONG TO AN ORGANISING MEETING**

On June 21, people from Prescribed Areas will rally in Darwin to mark the four year anniversary and launch a program for an alternative to the Intervention.

Here in Sydney, we will rally in support in a strong demonstration against racism.

Please come along to an organising meeting on Monday May 2 or ensure that a representative from your organisation attends the meeting.

**With guest speaker Barb Shaw, Alice Springs**

**Monday May 2, 6pm,** Teachers Federation Conference Centre, Level 1, 23-33 Mary Street Surry Hills (turn off Elizabeth st at Albion St and left onto Mary street)