



# Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Sydney Archdiocese



ABN: 41 231 661 451

## Media Statement 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013

### What have we learnt from Bringing them home?

Last week, comments by the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory Adam Giles that children who are not cared for properly by their families will be adopted provoked a strong response from Northern Territory leaders.

Rev Dr Djiniyini Gondarra, OAM, Yolŋu Makarr Dhuni Djawarrkmirr spokesperson makes the point that since the Intervention started in 2007, family support services have almost disappeared while at the same time the number of children being moved out of home has almost doubled. Two thirds of the children are placed with non-Indigenous families outside their own communities.

Graeme Mundine, Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, said "In 2013, we are still dealing with the consequences of the Stolen Generations. Because of that tragic chapter in our history we have the benefit of knowing exactly what the effect of removals such as these will have on Aboriginal people and the legacy that will continue for generations.

"No one wants a child to be harmed in any way, and as a community we have a responsibility to protect children. But we know from past experiences that removing children causes long term harm to the child, their family and their community".

Mr Mundine said, "There are other alternatives, other culturally appropriate alternatives, such as family support programs and family group conferences.

"The NT Government has cut funding to the very services that could help these families. It seems that it would rather take the cheaper and quicker option of adoption rather than put appropriate resources into long term support of families.

"Aboriginal people in the NT have been systematically disempowered since the introduction of the Intervention. Adopting Aboriginal children rather than addressing the core issues is just another step in the same direction.

"I support the Yolŋu Makarr Dhuni Djawarrkmirr request to Government that they work together to address the underlying causes of our situation, and build a safe and healthy future that empowers and uplifts Aboriginal people, for generations to come." Mr Mundine concluded.

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Background information is at <https://acmsydney.wordpress.com/2013/05/20/keeping-them-home-what-have-we-learnt-from-bringing-them-home/>