



Opponents of the plan to close Western Australian communities rallied in Sydney's Belmore Park. Picture: Sabine Kacha

Melbourne streets closed by marchers



CROWDS of people opposing the closure of remote Aboriginal communities in Western Australia shut down streets in central Melbourne on Friday, April 10. "Enough is enough – where is the justice for Aboriginal people?" a speaker shouted to the crowd before the walk through city streets, flanked by police.

The rally forced the closure of Flinders and Elizabeth streets, where surrounding streets soon became clogged with cars and trams forced to stop. Police, on foot and horses, followed the marchers all the way.

Jason Maxwell, 31, of the Dandenong Ranges, was among the protesters.

"I disagree, strongly disagree, in selling out on the Aboriginal communities just for money," he told AAP.

Mr Maxwell said the WA and federal governments should recognise the importance of the link between Indigenous people and their lands, and it was wrong to describe this as a 'lifestyle choice'.

"It is the worst thing that a modern government could ever say," he said. "It's a political tool to separate us, and I think it is wrong."

Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta man Alan Coe said Prime Minister Tony Abbott was wrong in his description of remote Aboriginal communities.

"They are connected and tied to that land," he said. "They cannot leave the land even if they want to because they have cultural, traditional and family responsibilities."

"The reasons governments want Aboriginal people to move is because of the mineral resources in the land." – With AAP

Rallies oppose closure move

By NATALIE CROMB



HUNDREDS of people marched in Sydney on April 10 to oppose the planned closure of remote Aboriginal communities in Western

Australia. The rally was one of many across the country. The Sydney rally was organised by the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy, Indigenous Social Justice Association, Grandmothers Against Removals and Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney.

It began with speeches in Belmore Park, then participants marched to The Block in nearby Redfern.

Activist Felon Mason said that while anger at injustice is being directed towards policies of Coalition governments, previous Labor governments did not have a lot to be proud about either in light of the bipartisan support for the Northern Territory Intervention.

Moved by support

Wiradjuri woman Jenny Munro, the founder of the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy, said she was moved by the display of support.

A highlight of the Belmore Park rally was the demonstration of solidarity by Maori people, who performed a haka and spoke of their respect for the sovereignty of the

Indigenous custodians of Australia and their absolute support for the Indigenous fight for equality.

The march proceeded down Pitt Street and stopped traffic at Railway Square for a corroboree before heading to Redfern, where protesters also sent a message to developer Deicorp that the development in The Block was not welcome at the expense of affordable Aboriginal housing.

At The Block, Ken Canning spoke about the fight for equality and against injustice, and the importance of community.

A national day of action is planned for May 1, with rallies planned across the country and in New Zealand.



"When Dad passed away, we didn't have to worry about funeral costs."

Don't leave your family with the stress of a large funeral bill. By getting started now, you can rest assured we'll be there for your family if anything happens to you.

- ✓ Australia's only Aboriginal dedicated funeral plan
- ✓ 20 years working in the Aboriginal community
- ✓ No fuss automated fortnightly payments
- ✓ Affordable from just \$6 a fortnight
- ✓ Fast payouts of \$4,000 to \$15,000

It's easy to apply. Talk to someone today!

☎ 1800 622 924

✉ SMS/TXT 0488 88 2223

✉ info@acbf.com.au

🌐 www.acbf.com.au

 **Aboriginal Community Funeral Plan**
FOR YOU, FOR YOUR FAMILY



This Plan is run by a private company which is not connected with or sponsored by any governmental or similar body or any Aboriginal organisation