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Tuesday August 9, 2011

“Stronger Futures report will continue failed Intervention”: Protesters target Minister Macklin

Today at 5pm, Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney activists will protest Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin’s address to the Sydney Institute (1 Bligh St Sydney CBD). Minister Macklin will be presenting the “Stronger Futures” report, which has been condemned as a blueprint for continuing the failed Northern Territory Intervention.

A 470 page Government Finance Department report on Indigenous Affairs spending (made public this week through Freedom of Information) shows billions of dollars of waste and the abject failure of governments to improve the shameful poverty Aboriginal people remain subject to.

"It is a disgrace that Minister Macklin will use the International Day of the World's Indigenous People to talk about continuing policies aimed at centralising Indigenous populations and forcing assimilation. Despite Minister Macklin's rhetoric about a 'new partnership' with Indigenous people, *Stronger Futures* makes policy commitments which would continue the NT Intervention and ensure no future for most Indigenous communities." Said Paddy Gibson from STICS.

“The Gillard Government’s continuing commitment to this racist Intervention is irrefutable proof that the Australian Labor Party has lost its moral compass. All Australians must rally together to send a message to those in Canberra that we deserve better than measures that stigmatise the poorest and most marginalised people in our community. But more importantly, we need to let our brothers and sisters in the Northern Territory know that they are not alone. We will stand beside them in solidarity until their human rights are restored.” Said Nicole Watson from Jumbunna House of Learning (UTS).

"Minister Macklin can't hide from the failures of the Intervention. Despite upwards of \$2 billion being spent on the program, social crises have accelerated. There has been 30 per cent increase in Indigenous incarceration, doubling of rates of attempted suicide and self harm and more children taken from their families." Continued Paddy Gibson.

“Income Management – the centre-piece of the Intervention – costs over \$4000 to administer per person annually. The government plans to expand the scheme to Bankstown and other trial sites, but a campaign is growing to stop the policy.” Said Paddy.

"Community leaders in the NT have presented Minister Macklin with alternatives to the Intervention, including the widely endorsed program “Rebuilding From the Ground Up”. The program calls for investment in community controlled organisations and jobs across all NT communities.” Said Paddy Gibson

For comment contact:

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What: Protest at Minister Jenny Macklin’s Sydney Institute address

When: 5pm Tuesday August 9

Where: 1 Bligh st, Sydney CBD