



Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney

stoptheintervention@gmail.com
www.stoptheintervention.org

Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney

Media Release

19 March 2015

First Nations Women Speak out for a Treaty Rosalie Kunoth-Monks sets out a brighter vision

With Aboriginal homelands again under threat of Government closure, a powerful line up of Aboriginal women will assemble in Sydney, this Friday 20th March, to advocate the importance of a Treaty to establish legal recognition of their human rights and relationship to country.

Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney will host a public forum at the Redfern Community Centre (6pm start) to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The forum will provide a rare opportunity to hear directly from Arrernte-Alyawarra Elder, Rosalie Kunoth-Monks, an outspoken advocate for her people who featured in John Pilger's 2014 film 'Utopia'.

Also on the panel will be an array of impressive Aboriginal women spanning the generations and different professions: acclaimed journalist, Amy McQuire; lawyer and writer, Natalie Cromb; and activist and artist, Amala Groom.

Amid the rhetoric of "Recognition" and "Reconciliation", many strong and reasonable Aboriginal voices are calling for Treaty to recognise their sovereign rights as First Nations people.

Rosalie Kunoth-Monks: "We have to start from a basis of truth and the black people of this country are sovereign. They have been sovereign for thousands of years... Reconciliation has to happen where there is justice, where there is dialogue and there is a treaty in place."

The Abbott government decision to cut more than \$500 million from Aboriginal programs in 2014 is one of many new blows to Aboriginal communities. The threatened "closure" of remote communities in WA and SA will bring about a new wave of dispossession, increased homelessness and at worst, increased suicide and incarceration. Meanwhile, children are being removed from Aboriginal families at a sharper rate than during the time of the Stolen Generations.

As Amy McQuire has written, “Australia is the only first world nation with a significant Indigenous population that has never signed a treaty with Aboriginal nations. It also happens to be the nation which has the highest gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, jails Indigenous people at the highest rates in the world, a nation that has never recognized true land justice, and continues to deny its own history.”

Treaty would enshrine the right of self-determination which was promised to Aboriginal people when Australia ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 40 years ago and provide the legal basis for future relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

According to Natalie Cromb, Treaty would also “create a legacy for future generations to look upon with pride. Australia can become a nation proud of its rich cultural history and all that it entails by enacting a treaty which effectively conciliates the issues of contention between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians”.

The forum will be chaired by journalist and film-maker, Jeff McMullen.

For more information contact: Cathy Gill on 0422385852

Redfern Community Centre
Friday, 20th March, 5.30pm for a 6pm start