



Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney

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Media Release

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Time for Treaty - Sydney Public Forum

“A Treaty would empower us, bring pride and outcomes, allow us to make decisions for ourselves and put us in charge of our own destiny.” Tauto Sansbury, Narungga Elder

On Monday, 14 March in Redfern, Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney (STICS) will host a public forum – “Men speak out for Treaty”.

This timely event comes in the wake of the Victorian government’s [announcement](#) that it will begin Treaty negotiations with First Nations people within weeks. The announcement was made after 500 First Nations leaders in Victoria [unanimously rejected](#) constitutional recognition and passed a motion demanding that the State “resources a treaty process, including a framework for treaties, with complete collaboration with all Sovereign Peoples and Nations”.

The Redfern forum will give Sydneysiders the chance to hear from one of the attendees at the Victorian meeting, Terry Mason, along with four other powerful First Nations voices from around the country.

While the federal government is pushing constitutional recognition, the call for Treaty is growing.

Narungga Elder Tauto Sansbury, [writes](#): “Shamefully, Australia is the only Commonwealth country that has not negotiated a Treaty with its traditional owners. This is a sad indictment on this country and has created a real barrier for meaningful change.”

The absence of Treaty has allowed the Australian government to continually force harmful policies on Aboriginal people, such as the Northern Territory Intervention. This punitive initiative and its later incarnation – Stronger Futures – has not only failed to improve the socioeconomic conditions of Aboriginal people, it has compounded the harm of 228 years of colonial dispossession.

A [recent report](#) on the Intervention by the Castan Centre for Human Rights found that many of Australia’s international human rights obligations continue to be “directly and knowingly violated or ignored” by the government, while no substantial improvement has been delivered in any of the areas covered by the “Close the Gap” goals.

Meanwhile, an “increasing and inordinate” number of First Nations People are being incarcerated, reports of self-harm or suicide by Indigenous children have increased 500%, and there has been a sharp rise in the number of Aboriginal children in care.

Yolngu Nations Assembly Spokesperson, Yingiya Mark Guyula, who will speak at the forum, said on social media all First Nations People should “call for diplomatic talks with the Australian Government, because that thing called ‘closing the gap’ is getting wider and wider, and what they are doing is against our will”.

Chris Sarra, Founding Chairman of the Stronger Smarter Institute, [says](#) while matters of constitutional recognition are important, “ultimately what is required is a treaty between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia”. We must all be committed to “an outcome that will finally see the humanity of Aboriginal Australia honoured in the way that it should be”.

Following on from STICS’ successful 2015 forum, First Nations ‘Women Speak out for Treaty’, this event will feature five First Nations Men, followed by Q&A:

Yingiya Mark Guyula: Djambarrpuyngu Nation, Yolngu Nations Assembly Spokesperson

Terry Mason: Awabakal Man, Chair of NTEU A&TSI Policy Committee

Tony McAvoy SC: Wiri Man, Barrister

Tauto Sansbury: Narungga Elder and Aboriginal Advocate

Chris Sarra: Gurang Gurang, Founding Chairman, Stronger Smarter Institute

Facilitator: Jeff McMullen, journalist and film-maker

Monday 14th March 2016, 6 pm for 6.30 pm start, Redfern Community Centre, 29-53 Hugo Street Redfern.

For more information contact: Cathy Gill on 0422385852