

Come and show your support at this Sunday's Rally:

3 YEARS OF RACIST SHAME - STOP THE INTERVENTION

THIS SUNDAY JUNE 20TH, 12pm AT TOWN HALL SQUARE

Speakers include Steve Jumpinjimpa - bilingual teacher from Lajamanu NT and Lee Rhiannon, NSW Greens MP.

- **Make All Laws Subject to the Racial Discrimination Act**
- **Real Jobs not BasicsCards**
- **Land Rights not Leases**
- **Stop Compulsory Income Management**

Endorsed by: MUA NSW Branch (Maritime Union of Australia), NSW Reconciliation Council, SUPRA, The Greens, Unions NSW

www.stoptheintervention.org

In this digest:

1. Rally Sunday 20th June: 3 Years of racist shame - Stop the NT Intervention
2. Report from speaking tour of Kalkaringi "BasicsCard" worker P. Inverway

1. Rally Sunday 20th: 3 Years of racist shame - Stop the NT Intervention

Three years of federal intervention into Aboriginal communities in the NT has created a mounting pile of reports damning it as racist and destructive. But to the despair of those living with the policies, Labor's new legislation entrenches and extend the intervention – which explains why they have the support of the Tony Abbott's Liberals.

Despite having spent over a billion dollars on the intervention, the government can't point to any evidence of progress in the 73 Aboriginal communities 'prescribed' under the intervention. The children of the 1960s whose lives were controlled by mission managers and the rations system say that intervention appointed Government Business Managers and compulsory income management have taken their communities backwards - to the days before equal wages, before land rights, before self-determination.

Macklin and Rudd say their Aboriginal Affairs policy is 'evidence-based', but have spent recent months papering over evidence that links the intervention to increased rates of alcohol related violence, childhood malnutrition and overcrowded housing.

On the eve of Macklin's planned expansion of income management (or welfare quarantining) across the NT – a move that allows the government to claim the policy is no longer racially discriminatory, the Medical Journal of Australia published the first quantitative evaluation of income management, conducted by the *Menzies School of Health Research*. Income management sees 50% of all welfare payments paid into a "BasicsCard" that can only be spent in particular shops on particular items. The Menzies School research contradicts Macklin's claims that income management leads to more healthy food in the stomachs of Aboriginal children, and shows that tobacco and soft-drink sales had remained the same or increased since the imposition of the BasicsCard system.

Compulsory 5-year leases have seen the NT government in control of all 73 townships for over 2-years. This take-over of Aboriginal land and housing also requires the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA). Yet the \$672 million Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure (SIHIP) has failed to deliver more than a handful of houses (there are 7 to-date in over 2 years).

7,500 people working in the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) before the intervention were thrown onto the dole in order that their incomes be quarantined onto BasicsCards. After Rudd's election CDEP was reinstated. But now what's called CDEP compels thousands to work running services in their communities, working sometimes 24-plus hours a week for \$200 a week Newstart payment. Half of this money is quarantined onto the BasicsCard – effectively a food card. Aboriginal people are working for rations again.

The federal government's refusal to provide \$8.5 million annual funding will see a further 500 paid jobs which were created with the abolition of CDEP, lost in June.

At its heart the intervention blames Aboriginal communities for their poverty. Rather building houses and creating jobs in all communities where they are needed, the government enacts punitive control measures accompanied by rhetoric about fostering Aboriginal 'responsibility'. Three years of intervention has brought great shame to Aboriginal people. But the real shame is the Labor government's continuation of racism through such failed policies.

2. Report from speaking tour of Kalkaringi "BasicsCard" worker P. Inverway:

From 4th-11th June P. Inverway (PI), a construction worker from Kalkaringi (Wave Hill) in the NT toured Sydney. PI is working for \$4 an hour plus \$85 a week for food on his BasicsCard. For this he and ten others have been doing 24 hours a week turning an old power station into a new arts and craft centre.

PI toured building sites with CFMEU (construction union) organisers to raise support for the fight for real jobs and real wages in Aboriginal communities. PI told workers that his people went on strike and walked off pastoral stations in 1966 in the famous Gurrindji Wave Hill walk-off. They fought for land rights and against the ration system where they were paid in sugar, flour, tea and a bit of tobacco. In October 1966, months after they walked off, Gurrindji leaders were flown to Sydney to tour work-sites with several unions and build support for their strike.

As PI explained to the mass meetings, 44 years later he has come to Sydney to ask the union movement to support his people - once more fighting for real wages and real jobs. Workers at the meetings were astounded and disgusted that PI is being paid \$4 an hour to do the work they get paid \$24 - \$26 an hour to do. Many signed petitions and donated money towards the campaign.

PI also addressed Unions NSW and got support for his people's fight.

The campaign for Jobs with Justice in Aboriginal communities has forced Minister Macklin to respond to reports of mass exploitation under the new CDEP (now merely work-for-the-dole). Macklin has tried to side-line concerns in announcing a departmental investigation. But the exploitation of CDEP workers like PI is not an aberration - this is how the NT government intends to provide services through the new Mega Shires across the NT.

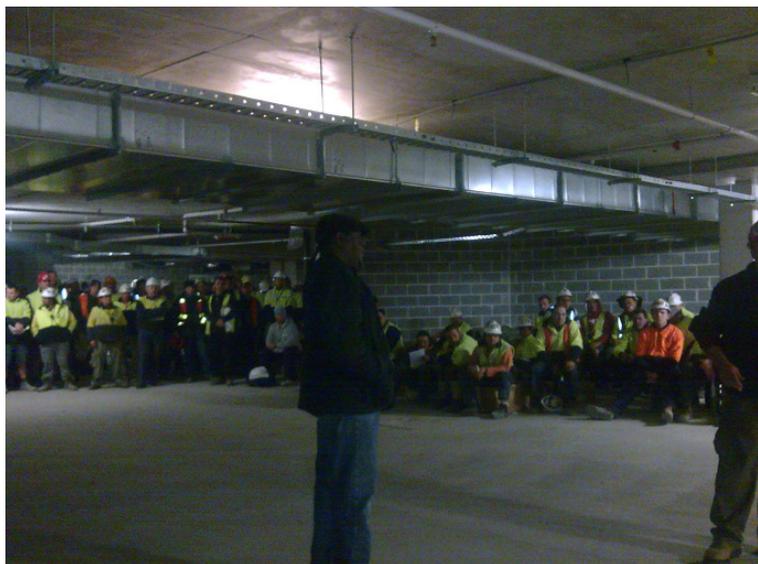
Get involved in the campaign. Sign the petition online at:

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/jobswithjustice/>

Get copies of the petition and material for your workplace or organisation.

Contact Jean 0449 646 593

Photos from the tour:



PI addresses fellow construction workers at a CFMEU stop-work meeting



Members of STICS hold photos of the 1966 Gurrinji tour of unions in Sydney while PI addresses MUA members at Port Botany.

Here PI is interviewed by Michelle Lovegrove on SBS Radio:

[http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/aboriginal/highlight/page/id/89412/t/Working-for-\\$4-an-hour/in/english](http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/aboriginal/highlight/page/id/89412/t/Working-for-$4-an-hour/in/english)

From The Age:

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/for-some-workers-the-struggle-will-never-end-20100615-yd9p.html>

For some workers, the struggle will never end

ANDRA JACKSON

June 16, 2010