



THE CASE **AGAINST** THE NT INTERVENTION

speakers include:

Rev. Dr. Djiniyini Gondarra OAM
Senior Elder from Elcho Island

HOSTED BY THE CFMEU INDIGENOUS COMMITTEE



"The Intervention policy has taken us back to the 1950s, to the assimilation era. We have lost everything.

Aboriginal people must be free to determine our own futures. Any future initiative must support the right of Aboriginal people to maintain our languages, cultural practices and the capacity to live and work on country.

Income Management takes away pride and dignity as a person. Now other communities around Australia are in line to become victims. We invite you brothers and sisters, walk with us, then fight a system that victimises people."

~

Rev. Dr. Djiniyini Gondarra OAM, Senior Elder, Elcho Island

Contact Lara Watson: 0428 715 368

5:45PM SATURDAY DEC 3 @ MORI GALLERY
168 DAY ST (5 mins walk from Darling Harbour)

Jobs with Justice - Unions campaign for Aboriginal rights

In a proud tradition stretching back beyond the Gurindji strike and walk-off from Wave Hill station in 1966, trade unions have played a key role supporting Aboriginal communities struggling against the injustice of the NT Intervention.

More than 7500 Aboriginal people were employed on Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), before attacks under the Intervention which forced many onto the dole. The remaining 2000 properly waged CDEP positions will be abolished from April 2012.

Under new CDEP arrangements, Aboriginal people must work for their Centrelink entitlements, with 50% often 'quarantined' onto a BasicsCard. This is working for rations again.

'BasicsCard workers' do not have the protection of the Fair Work Act, OHS or Superannuation laws.

'BasicsCard workers' are used on building sites, in municipal works and aged-care. Some of these workers have joined the CFMEU and United Voice to fight for change.

Without an employment program, many communities are struggling to survive. Daguragu, the historic community won by Gurindji strikers, has lost its bakery, brickworks, family centre, canteen and CDEP office among other cuts.

Unions NT, the CFMEU and a host of national unions have signed a joint statement calling for 'jobs with justice' - an immediate end to the discrimination of the Intervention and investment in a new, properly waged employment program to replace CDEP.

Key to the historic win of the Gurindji strikers in the 1960s was promoting the campaign amongst workers in the city. Similarly, the anti-Intervention campaign has seen 'BasicsCard workers' and Aboriginal campaigners address thousands of construction workers, nurses' delegates, and port-workers, along with state Trades and Labour Councils.

In 2010, the CFMEU, AMWU, AWU, MUA, United Voice and Unions NT helped build a "protest-house" for the Alyawarr people of Central Australia who had staged a walk-off against Intervention laws. And later in the year, a large ACTU delegation held a 'fact-finding' mission, visiting communities affected by the NTER and pledging support.

**For more information, or to get involved in the campaign contact the
Stop the Intervention Collective
www.stoptheintervention.org**

CO-OPERATION NOT INTERVENTION CALL FOR A NEW DIRECTION IN THE NT

This is an abridged version of a joint statement released on November 23 in response to new NT Intervention legislation. For the full statement and list of supporters see www.acoss.org.au

Supporters include: Australian Council of Social Service, Australian Education Union Northern Territory, Public Health Association of Australia, Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory comprising the Central Land Council, Northern Land Council, Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the NT, North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency and Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service

"While some aspects of the Government's announcement that it will maintain investment in the Northern Territory are encouraging, the proposed expansion of the SEAM program that withdraws income support payments from parents whose children aren't attending school suggests that a punitive, top-down approach to social problems is still being pursued," said ACOSS CEO Dr Cassandra Goldie.

"The Governments focus should be on positive approaches to engage families and that take into account the barriers to participation in school in remote communities," said Priscilla Collins, CEO, North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency.

The strong message from recent consultations with Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory is that people want reliable services, schools and jobs in their own communities, not that they think simplistic 'get tough' policies are the answer.

In the 'Stronger Futures' consultations, community members suggested introducing Aboriginal culture into the curriculum, involving elders and parents more in school activities, developing mentoring programs for parents, and doing more to attract and retain good teachers. This fits with what the research shows works. Aboriginal communities and peak organisations have also been calling for the reinstatement of bilingual learning for the same reason, because it works.

The evaluation report into the NTER concludes that: 'There has been no observable improvement in school attendance between 2006, before the NTER was introduced, and 2010, the last year for which data are available.'

"It is deeply disappointing to see the Federal Government aligning itself with policies such as compulsory income management and SEAM. These are costly distractions from the real task of reducing inequality and exclusion. You don't build people and communities up by attacking their dignity and their right to self-determination," said John Falzon, CEO, St Vincent de Paul Society National Council of Australia.

Although the announcement of new jobs in the Northern Territory is welcome, it should be noted that more than 2000 waged positions within Community Development Employment Projects still operating in NT communities are set to be abolished from April next year.

The suspension of income support payments, like the blanket scheme of compulsory Income Management for long-term recipients of Newstart and Parenting payments in the Territory, discriminate against the poorest

and indirectly against Indigenous Australians.

Instead of extending the punitive approach the Government should take a new road. It should withdraw the current legislation and engage with communities and their community organisations and peak bodies on whether they want to replace policies such as SEAM and income management that were imposed on them compulsorily, with voluntary or 'opt in' income support arrangements and support services tailored to the needs of each community.

NEW LAWS EXTEND DISCRIMINATION

Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory legislation recently tabled in parliament will extend discriminatory Intervention powers for a further 10 years including:

- "Star Chamber" powers held by the Australian Crime Commission for investigations in Aboriginal communities, including removal of the right to silence. This despite the ACC dismissing the disgraceful allegations that "pedophile rings" were operating in Indigenous communities, which led then Minister Mal Brough to legislate the powers.

- Prohibition of consideration of Aboriginal customary law and cultural practice in bail and sentencing. Chief Justice Riley of the NT Supreme Court has said this measure means, "Aboriginal offenders do not enjoy the same rights as offenders from other sections of the community".

- Blanket bans on alcohol on Aboriginal Land, despite consistent opposition from the Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the NT (APO NT) who have said, "The decision regarding alcohol restrictions should be for relevant residents to make... The principal effect of these widely flouted laws has been to further criminalise and alienate many residents".

- Blanket bans on X18+ material on Aboriginal Land. These restrictions literally treat Aboriginal people as children and stigmatise Aboriginal men.

- Continued suspension of the operations of the permit system in Aboriginal townships, again in direct contradiction of APO NT who said, "communities feel as though they have lost control... the flow on effects are overwhelmingly seen as negative and counterproductive to community safety".

Visiting UN representatives have consistently rejected the characterisation of these measures as "special measures" under the Racial Discrimination Act.

Proposed amendments to the Social Security Act will see further attacks on the rights of Centrelink recipients.

- An expansion of the School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM) means chronic school attendance problems could see families cut off certain Centrelink payments entirely.

- Staff from nominated government agencies will have the power to summarily order people onto Income Management in the same way that Child Protection agencies currently do.

- Staff from nominated government agencies will be able to pass on information about clients to Centrelink, even if doing so contravenes State or Territory law.

- Income Management will follow you even if you move out of an Income Management area.