

# explaining the new laws

## Income Management

In an attempt to make income management compatible with the RDA the government is expanding it to cover certain welfare recipients throughout the Northern Territory. In prescribed areas the transition to the new system will take place over 12 months starting from July 2010, increasing the cost of income management from \$5m to \$105m per year.

Several 'vulnerable' broad groups will automatically have 50% of their welfare quarantined. The government will have the power to label a region as a "declared income management area". Within these areas anyone who falls into one of the above categories automatically has their welfare quarantined. The entire NT has been categorized as a "declared income management area". An opt-out system will be set up but this will not come into effect as individual communities are transitioned to the new system. For some this may mean they have no legal right to claim exemption until July 2011.

Despite these changes it will still be Indigenous people who are most affected by welfare quarantining. The Human Rights Commission explained in a recent paper that a law breaches the RDA if it has a disproportionate impact on a particular racial group. Yet disadvantaged communities are still largely Indigenous communities in the NT.

## Special Measures

The government is re-branding other Intervention controls as "special measures", again in an attempt to make them compatible with the RDA. Under the RDA a "special measures", or positive discrimination, are allowed if they promote the interests of a particular racial group and have that groups consent. These measures include:

- Alcohol Restrictions- A report commissioned by the government found that alcohol restrictions in prescribed areas had led to, "dangerous drinking outside of town boundaries, increased road accidents and personal injury due to unsafe drinking practice and a deterioration in relations between the community and the police."

- Five-year land leases- See the section on the Ampilatwja walk-off

## Consultations

Macklin has claimed that the continuation and expansion of welfare quarantining is supported



by people living under the Intervention based on consultations carried out by the government. However, these consultations were inherently flawed. A recent government report found that malnutrition rates in children have risen by 13% since the Intervention and income management began. The Sunrise Health Service in Katherine reported that child anemia rates trebled in the first two years of the Intervention.

The government has stated that the changes to the measures of the Intervention are the result of a thorough consultation process and are what Indigenous people living under the Intervention want. Yet two reports have revealed this "consultation" process to be a complete sham. The government employed the organization CIRCA to monitor the consultation process and although CIRCA officially endorsed the process, the contents of their report reveal a highly dubious process. The report states that the consultations were carried out by public servants who delivered "key messages" to those being "consulted", including describing the benefits of the Intervention and in some cases openly defending the government from criticisms made. CIRCA also noted that a number of government accounts of the consultations were distorted in favour of the Intervention, for example government accounts "did not clearly indicate the extent of negativity towards income management that CIRCA consultants observed in the meeting." Additionally, no interpreters were present at a third of all public consultations.

For more information on the Consultation Process, Gleebooks will be launching 'This is what We Said: Aboriginal People Give their Opinion on the Intervention' at 49 Glebe Pt Rd, Glebe on Tuesday Feb 16, 6.30pm.



## stop the new intervention laws join the campaign!

In the two years since Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generations, we have seen the Labor Government extend Howard's NT Intervention to pursue an agenda reminiscent of past policies of racist assimilation. Using the rationale of protecting Aboriginal women and children, the punitive Intervention policies have worsened, rather than improved, the conditions in NT Aboriginal communities.

Public pressure has led to continued calls for the re-introduction of the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA), which was suspended to introduce the Intervention. Rather than simply scrapping the Intervention and reinstating the RDA, Labor is using tricky legal manoeuvres to keep all the same controls on Aboriginal communities in place. The reality of the racist Intervention measures of income management, business managers and compulsory land leases will continue. Moreover, the RDA will not be re-instated until December 31 2010. This will give the government time to pre-

sure Indigenous communities into signing over their land on 40-year leases. For example, the Alice Springs town camp residents were unable to challenge threats of compulsory acquisition of their land due to the suspension of the RDA. As a result, they were forced to sign over their land on 40-year leases.

Using Ministerial powers granted by the Intervention laws Macklin could immediately de-prescribe communities, grant mass exemptions from Income Management and declare that the NT Anti-Discrimination Act applies to Intervention legislation. However, the Government is not listening to Aboriginal people. It is up to the fast-growing coalition of union and community groups to fight for an end to the Intervention. The new laws cannot be passed until March. We must use this time to expose what is really happening. Join Stop the Intervention Collective, come to our public meeting on the Ampilatwja Walk-Off Against the Intervention and get involved in the campaign.

## rudd's new laws entrench the racist intervention

- ▶ the continuing suspension of the RDA blackmails Aboriginal communities into signing long-term leases over their land
- ▶ the extension of racist welfare quarantine measures across the NT still target Aboriginal communities
- ▶ federal government "consultations" with Aboriginal communities allow rebranding of the intervention as "special measures" meant to benefit Aboriginal people
- ▶ the government won't listen: we need to build a movement to end the intervention

## inside:

more info on new laws, ampilatwja walk-off, how to get involved!



# union support for ampilatwatja

## community walk-off demonstrates way forward for intervention campaign

### Ampilatwaja community set up a protest camp against the Intervention

Alyawarr people from Ampilatwatja "walked off" their community in July 2009, to get away from the discriminatory controls of the NT Intervention and the raw sewage that was flowing on their streets. The walk-off camp was set up outside the boundaries of the "prescribed area" established by the Intervention. This strong stand has become an important inspirational focus for the national campaign.

### Union "protest house" reveals the hypocrisy of the Intervention

A "protest house" is to be opened on February 14, at the walk-off camp established by the Alyawarr people. A solidarity brigade is working alongside young Alyawarr to build a house at the camp is made up of union representatives from the CFMEU, AMWU, AWU, LHMU and Unions NT. This coincides with national demonstrations against the NT Intervention.

Union support in 2 weeks has achieved more than the \$680 million Intervention housing program (SIHIP) achieved in 2 years. This house reveals the hypocrisy of Government's stated reason for obtaining five-year leases the start of the Intervention - to "cut through red tape and get housing and infrastructure built quickly". Since the Intervention, only two houses have just been completed in the Wadeye community, who were forced to sign a 99-year lease. Despite critical overcrowding, there will be nothing for communities like Ampilatwatja, where services have been cut back. Funding is only being given to 20 "hub towns" under government control. The \$1.5 billion Intervention has been used to install white managers and bureaucracies to control Aboriginal lives.

### Let's grow the union support to end the Intervention!

The growing union support for the Anti-Intervention campaign is central to our ability to seriously pressure the Government to overturn the Intervention. Unions have played a central role in the historical fight for Aboriginal rights - from the Wave Hill Strike to the Gurinji Walk-Off. Numerous

unions have already passed motions against the Intervention and are becoming more actively involved in the campaign. **Get into touch with Stop the Intervention Collective to pass a motion at your local branch and circulate notice of the Union Protest House Reportback.**

### Welfare quarantines - a return to the ration days

For many of the old Alyawarr people, the intervention's Basics card is a direct reminder of the ration days.

"Just like that welfare card, they're making us go backward, back to the welfare days", Banjo Morton from Ampilatwaja said ...There's no work for my mob. Things were working good before the shire [and the five-year lease] came in there." Before the Intervention, many of the workers providing municipal and community services in Ampilatwatja under the local council had been employed through the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP). But changes beginning in July last year stipulate that all new CDEP "workers" are paid through Centrelink, rather than local organisations. 50 per cent of all "payments" are Income Managed. Like all other welfare recipients under the Intervention, CDEP workers have a Basics Card that can only buy a limited range of items at designated shops.

## ▶▶▶ protest house reportback mtg ▶▶▶

STICS is hosting a public reportback meeting from the union brigade that built the "protest house" in Ampilatwatja. Come along!

### attention union members!

Union support is crucial to building the campaign against the Intervention. Things you can do:

- pass a motion at your local branch
- circulate details of the protest house reportback meeting
- ask for a STICS speaker at your union meeting or workplace



## from the Construction Report Alyawarr People's Protest House

The Alyawarr people walked off of their community of Ampilatwatja in protest against the Northern Territory intervention. After two and a half years and \$672 million, the intervention has only provided two new houses for Aboriginal people. The Alyawarr people together with unionists have just finished the first house, dubbed "The Protest House".



Emma Murphy STICS, Wed Feb 24 630pm  
Rebel Hanlon CFMEU, MUA Office  
Paul McAleer MUA, Level 2, 365 Sussex St  
Liz Barrett LHMU, Sydney

Organised by Stop The Intervention Collective  
Endorsed by:   
www.stoptheintervention.org.au Jean 0449 646 593, Mon 0415 410 448  
Donations may be made directly into STICS's account OUR BANK DETAILS ARE:  
Account Name: Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney  
BSB number: 06 2212 Account number: 10452725 ABN 56 162 064 644.

## donate!

Your donation will help bring an end to the NT Intervention. Donations may be made directly into our bank account.

Account Name:  
Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney  
BSB number: 06 2212  
Account number: 10452725  
ABN 56 162 064 644

## get involved! join stics

It is as important as ever to get involved in the building the campaign against the Intervention. Growing union and community support holds real possibilities for making an impact. But we need you! Stop the Intervention Collective is an open collective which organises against the NT Intervention. Anyone interested in becoming involved is encouraged to come along.

We meet Mondays 6pm, at the Teachers Federation, Level 1, 23-33 Mary St, Surry Hills.

For more information contact Jean on 0449646593 or Mon 0415410558.

www.stoptheintervention.org