

5 reasons why Jenny Macklin should close down the Intervention

1. The Intervention is discriminatory
2. There has been no meaningful consultation with community leaders and Elders
3. There are real fears the Intervention will be used as a way for the Government to take the lands away from traditional owners
4. The Intervention fails to recognise traditional rights and traditional laws
5. Bureaucracy and inflated project costs mean much of the billions of dollars being spent on the Intervention won't get to the people and communities it was designed for.

Stop the Intervention!

An exclusive report by
Geoff Bagnall

If there was any doubt there should be none now. Indigenous leaders throughout Australia have said overwhelmingly that Jenny Macklin should stop the Intervention in the Northern Territory.

Twenty seven of Australia's Indigenous leaders, including Gail Mabo from the Torres Strait Islands, agreed to respond to our request to declare whether they believed the Intervention should continue. To a person they have declared: No, it shouldn't.

They were all responding to the February 17 edition of The National Indigenous Times that featured a powerful appeal from traditional Elders from remote communities in the Northern Territory who declared the Intervention was destroying their communities and their hope of a future for the families.

The appeal by the Elders was led by Rosalie Kunoth-Monks and Rev Dr Djinyini Gondarra with the support of Elders from another five communities in the Territory. They signed an open letter to all Australians appealing for their support in having the Intervention stopped.

The response from leaders has been overwhelmingly in support of their call. The comments have come from leaders from all States and Territories of Australia and condemns the Federal Government for the impact the Intervention is having on Aboriginal communities.

The leaders who responded to a request for comment on the Intervention were: (from Queensland) Sam Watson, Gracelyn Smallwood, Chris Sarra and Kerry Blackman; (from NSW) Warren Mundine, Sol Bellear, Ray Jackson and Michael Anderson; (from the ACT) Karen Demmery, Mick Dodson and Mick Gooda; (from Victoria) Alf Bamblett and Reg Blow (from Tasmania) Michael Mansell, James Everett and Nala Mansell; (from South Australia) Klynton Wanganeen, Neil Gillespie and Peter Buckskin; (from Western Australia) Kado Muir and Wayne Bergmann; (from the Northern Territory) Rosalie Kunoth-Monks, Rev Dr Djinyini Gondarra, Maurie Japarta Ryan, Alison Anderson and Richard Downs; and (from the Torres Strait Islands) Gail Mabo.

From their comments it emerged there are five primary reasons why they believe the Intervention should be stopped. The leaders believe the Intervention is discriminatory; that there has been no meaningful consultation with community leaders and Elders on how best to address the issues confronting Aboriginal communities; there are real fears the Intervention will be used as a way for the Government to take the lands away from traditional owners; the Intervention fails to recognise traditional rights and traditional laws; and finally that bureaucracy and inflated project costs meant much of the billions of dollars being spent on the Intervention won't get to the people and communities it was designed for.

Read the comments from participating leaders on why they oppose the Intervention on pages 13, 14, 15, 42 and 43

Mal Brough, the supreme interventionist, agrees it's not working

Mal Brough, the Howard Government Minister who will always be remembered as the architect of the infamous Intervention into Northern Territory communities, has now declared the program isn't working.

In fact, Brough now believes the whole structure of the Intervention is broken beyond repair. It has, he said, become stagnant and buried in bureaucracy.

Mr Brough was Indigenous Affairs Minister in the Howard Government in 2007 when he launched the Intervention program, including

the use of Australian Army personnel, to end what was claimed to be a crisis in the Northern Territory.

It was effectively a declaration by the Howard Government of a state of emergency in some 73 Indigenous communities and introduced alcohol controls, compulsory quarantining of welfare payments and land acquisitions to allow for proper tenancy management to occur.

The policy has largely been accepted by the Rudd and Gillard Federal Labor governments

since then but only amid increasing demands from Indigenous leaders for the whole program to be closed down. There is growing disquiet the Intervention has become so steeped in bureaucracy and cost over-runs that whatever benefits there may have been are no longer possible.

Mr Brough claimed the Gillard government had left the Intervention "stagnant", allowing dysfunction to grow.

"The intervention isn't working," Mr Brough said.

"Because it wasn't the Labor Party's policy, they just adopted it for political reasons. They failed to take it to the next level.

"It has become stagnant and buried in bureaucracy. It is no longer working.

"Without radical changes, it is yet another failed approach. You are now seeing the concentration of human suffering. Serious action has to be taken where the fringe-dwellers are killing themselves and their kids.

"You need a zero-tolerance approach now," he said.

27 leaders across Australia call for an end to the program



One of the realities of the Intervention. Children from the Arlparra humpy camp, with their makeshift accommodation. 27 of the nation's Indigenous leaders have said the Northern Territory Intervention must be scrapped because it isn't working. File photo.

Intervention: Leaders say close it

Queensland

Sam Watson



The Intervention has been a bad thing. It has taken us back to the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, to the ration days.

It's a total blanket strategy that does not discriminate in terms of the problem a person or community may be trying to deal with. So you have persons who may have alcohol and substance abuse problems, you may have persons who may have dysfunctional family units, you may have persons who may have genuine need of some sort of regulation in their lives but because of the nature of the Intervention all people are painted with the same brush and all people are subjected to that draconian regime of absolute regulation.

So it's disempowering Aboriginal people from across the entire Territory. Non-Indigenous bureaucrats, who have no cultural experience or standing within the Aboriginal community, are now totally in charge of the lives of Aboriginal people and in many cases senior Aboriginal people.

Throughout the history of the Intervention it has never been designed or intended to deliver positive outcomes to Aboriginal people. It is only a blunt political tool to hammer and crush Aboriginal resistance, Aboriginal aspirations.

It is simply a matter of respecting the humanity, dignity and culture of Aboriginal people and empowering those people to take charge of their own lives, their own communities and their own destinies.

There is no intention by (Prime Minister) Gillard to remove it. Gillard has no political integrity at all. Abbott will stick to it because Abbott is firmly in the (Noel) Pearson school of regressive thought and unfortunately the Greens don't have the numbers in the House to do anything realistic.

Pearson was a backroom architect of the entire Intervention approach.

Howard consulted quite widely throughout his term in office with Pearson and his troops. I think he (Noel) very much has a flawed perception very much based on the Pat Killoran style of Native Affairs administration.

Unfortunately, Pearson's grown out of that school, out of that mentality and now he has influenced policy at a State and Federal level.

The basic protocol in the Aboriginal community is you don't dictate to other people in their own country, in their own land. Pearson reached across into other communities and implemented his regime of regulation. He reached

across and played a very major role in the Northern Territory administration which he had no business doing.

Gracelyn Smallwood



I'm all in favour of the Intervention being scrapped. I've travelled the world and lived on Indigenous communities all around the world from the 70s onwards and alcohol management plans and interventions have never worked around the world. I've never supported it since day one because it has absolutely nothing to do with violence and child abuse; it's to do with land grabs.

Why haven't alcohol bans, income management plans and interventions been put on the non-Indigenous community when the statistics are just as high?

The Government needs to have a whole review and talk to people from the grass roots upwards. It's just that there wasn't enough consultation with the grassroots people. I disagree (with minister Macklin's clam of widespread consultation with all affected groups) because of the amount of grass-roots communities from around the Northern Territory who have asked for help to scrap it and the film that was made by the Italian journalist about what the Intervention and alcohol management plans were doing.

The Northern Territory Intervention had done exactly the opposite of what the government claimed it had gone there to achieve.

Whilst governments are claiming that they have consulted, why is it that many grassroots communities, people and leaders in the Territory and around the country are opposing the Intervention? If it was working effectively towards self-determination, of course we'd support it.

The only people happy with the Intervention are the drug lords and the sly-groggers because they are making stacks of money off our poor people.

Let's not forget since the Intervention and alcohol management plans, amphetamine intake in our communities has almost skyrocketed by 100 per cent. Also, homelessness has increased because they put the cart before the horse. They never talked about rehabilitation and detoxification and Indigenous healing programs from a bottom up approach.

Alcohol and violence and drug misuse is a key symptom of colonisation on oppressed people. Therefore these things have been dealt with holistically and treated as a disease. And people must be treated with basic human rights.

It's like taking insulin away from diabetics, telling them to go to bed one night and the next morning wake up healed from diabetes. They will go anywhere to get that next shot of insulin. That's the same as anybody who is addicted to alcohol and drugs, whether you're black or white.

Chris Sarra



I think it's a despicable policy that still has the filthy stench of John Howard and those people around him that helped craft it.

The policy itself and the people who designed it have no capacity whatsoever to acknowledge and honour the human capacity and worth of Aboriginal people.

I think it's positive that there was interest in making a difference in the Territory and so I welcomed the level of resource investment. It had to be a level of investment in a way that acknowledges there is human capacity and humanity of Indigenous people.

The level of resourcing is necessary, but it is worth nothing if it comes with no capacity to honour the human capacity and humanity of Indigenous people.

It's a policy that says to Aboriginal people; 'you are so hopeless, you are despicable, you are so inhumane that we have to bring everything from the outside to fix you'. What is required is the same level of investment that comes in such a way that says; 'okay, there are some problems here, what are the things that are working? What do you perceive are the problems? What do you perceive are the solutions and how can we work together to resolve this?'

I'm talking about engaging the strengths and human capacity of Indigenous people instead of assuming there was none there in the first place and sending the army in to fix it.

The lease issue raises some questions about the motives of government. It is an outrageous policy, it is an outrageous approach. Howard and Brough, and the people who helped craft the Intervention, will always be dogged by this question; 'if you really cared about Aboriginal children, why didn't you do something about it earlier in your term of government?'

I have to confess I was disappointed Labor did not end the Intervention when it came to power as well, and I share that desire to draw a line in the sand and get beyond this policy and leave it as an ugly past and step beyond it into a future where we can sit down and engage Indigenous Australians in resolving the complexities of their own communities and start to do things with people and not to them.

Kerry Blackman



Any change has to always come from within not from the outside. It appears to someone on the eastern seaboard it is an archaic, draconian, oppressive type of approach.

I don't know about the Intervention well enough in regards to the outcomes that have been achieved. If you look at the housing for instance, it's pathetic, the amount of funds that's gone into administering the whole thing. That's just one example.

As far as the lease question goes you'd feel as though you're being ripped off. It doesn't matter what colour we are; red, black, yellow, white, pink or Aboriginal; everyone needs a land base to build a foundation for a future.

And when you take away that land base, what have Aboriginal people got? They have got nothing. We need a land base to build upon a vision and a foundation for the future.

It doesn't matter how much money you've got, you still need a land base to build on and you need to own that yourself.

They did the lease thing with colonisation, didn't they! Dispossession. They dispossessed our people in 1788. It's institutional dispossession.

In matters of support for or opposition to any measures on country, I would always defer to the wishes of the local Elders and people and I want to emphasise my respect for Dr Djinyini Gondarra.

New South Wales

Warren Mundine



We have got to go back to the reasons why the Intervention was put in place and there are some questions about the success of what was done and the long term effects of that.

I agreed with a lot of the Intervention, but I do have concerns that things have become a bit too controlled and bureaucratized rather than being able to let Indigenous communities develop and grow their capacities in their communities. It seems to have become bogged down

in bureaucratic red-tape and performance.

In the beginning I agreed that they had to look at the whole question of what caused the environment that led to that (Little Children are Sacred) report that came out and how they dealt with that report; looking at child safety and women's safety, looking at law and order issues. So, I believe doing that was correct. The intentions (and I differentiate that from the outcomes) were good in regards to changing the environment, making communities more viable and more functional and having more infrastructure.

The dragging out of it is the main issue. I think it has gone on for too long.

People have the right to live anywhere they like. You don't force people to move anywhere. Those days are long dead and gone. They should never happen. It sends a shudder up my back the thought of forcing people to relocate to different places. But we have to work out how we can put infrastructure in place that can service those communities.

The biggest issue (of what has gone wrong in the Intervention) is housing. Indigenous housing has failed for over 30 years. It has dragged on and it has been a tough, expensive process. I am a strong supporter of Macklin because the Minister is committed to shaking up those intransigent structures and making them work for communities on the ground. When I talk about Indigenous housing I'm not pointing my finger at Indigenous people, I'm talking about builders and government structures that have been the problem in this area.

I think we've got to this whole

area of welfare and income management and I'm not just talking about Indigenous people here. I know they used it in Indigenous communities, but I think that was a mistake. I think it should have been done for all Australians, in a lot of ways. It would be non-discriminatory.

We have to face the reality that welfare is a problem in our communities and welfare reform has to be on the agenda so we can start getting communities functioning and operating.

Sol Bellear




I'm dead against it, was against it when it first started and I still am more so now against it.

Why? Well, for any program or project that they have to suspend the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA), you know that is going to impact on Aboriginal people straight away.

They have only suspended the RDA three times before and the whole three times it has been against Aboriginal people: The Hindmarsh Island Bridge, The Intervention and one other.


The Intervention hasn't impacted on the mining



NSW
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Heritage Council
of New South Wales



Heritage Council of NSW
Aboriginal Heritage Advisory Panel
Youth Community Member Representative

Applications are invited from young people of Aboriginal descent for the position of Youth Community Representative on the Heritage Council of NSW Aboriginal Heritage Advisory Panel. Applicants should have a strong cultural association with their local area and Aboriginal community and a genuine interest in Aboriginal cultural heritage.

What does the role involve?
The Aboriginal Heritage Advisory Panel is responsible for:

- Providing advice to the Heritage Council of NSW on the development, evaluation and review of policies and programs for future directions of Aboriginal Heritage.
- Recommending applications for funding to the Heritage Council of NSW.
- Providing advice to the Heritage Council of NSW on proposed State Heritage Register Listings.
- Assisting in the co-ordination and participation of community consultations on matters for the NSW Department of Planning Heritage Branch.
- Assisting the Heritage Council to work with agencies and community bodies responsible for protecting Aboriginal heritage in NSW.

Selection Criteria: Applicants must have the following:

- A keen interest in learning about the issues impacting on Aboriginal cultural heritage matters.
- The ability to communicate effectively with Aboriginal people, especially other young Aboriginal people.
- Be 18 to 25 years of age.
- Be keen to work within a committee or group.
- Be willing to travel in New South Wales (four meetings per year).
- Be energetic, motivated and flexible.

Sitting Fees are payable and the Department will fund travel and accommodation costs to attend meetings.

Enquiries and Information Packages: Tanya Koeneman on 9873 8534 or 1800 789 290 or email at tanya.koeneman@planning.nsw.gov.au

Applications should address the selection criteria, including a brief description of your school and/or work history, the names of two people who can comment on your skills and a contact telephone number and email address.

Applications Marked 'Confidential' To: Tanya Koeneman, Senior Aboriginal Heritage Officer, NSW Department of Planning, Heritage Branch Locked Bag 5020 Parramatta NSW 2124 or emailed to tanya.koeneman@planning.nsw.gov.au

Applications close on: 25th March 2011

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The Intervention: nation's community leaders have their say

companies up there. The mining companies and the miners that live in those communities don't get their wages quarantined. They go out spending up on grog. They're the ones who introduced gambling through playing cards.

And the mining companies got away with everything scot-free and the Aboriginal people become the victims.

The whole thing's got to be dropped.

If (the government) is fair dinkum about self-determination then they'll let Aboriginal communities determine their future.

It is always government-imposed, on all these you-beat, flavour-of-the-month schemes they come up with. The Labor Party couldn't come up with anything worse so they just picked up where the Liberal Party left off.

There are Indigenous leaders who also had influence on the construction of the Intervention. They had to and that same person and a few others that ingratiate themselves, they sit there and they say 'we're just doing this for our community'.

The governments are going to pick up on what they say. The governments wouldn't dare go ahead if those few individuals were against it. So (the governments) know who the "Jackies" are. They know who to go to and talk to and say 'we're going to continue with the intervention ... it's in the best interests ... it's tough love', all that sort of bullshit. It's absolutely ridiculous. Nobody went and sat down with those communities and said 'here's what we'd like to trial'. They say it's a you-beat thing and it's worked. Well it hasn't worked. And they're now going to pull that into other States?

There's a lot of people I've spoken to in the Northern Territory who have said, 'well, I must've been away', or 'all of our community must've been out somewhere when they come through, because no one come here and sat down with us'.

What is going to happen here with the Intervention is that in 50 years time, the Prime Minister of the day, or if we're a republic, the President, will be making another national Apology to Aboriginal people the way the Stolen Generations happened.

Back then they thought it was a good idea to steal kids. In 50 years time there'll be another National Sorry Day for the Northern Territory people for bringing in the Intervention.

The United Nations people have come out against it, Human Rights people have come out against it. Aboriginal people are just being jumped over again. They wouldn't dare do that to a white community.

Ray Jackson



"When the Intervention first went in I was at least willing to give it a go. I understood the problems that were in the remote areas and the town camps. I thought extra police was a good thing. I thought alcohol bans and that was a good thing.

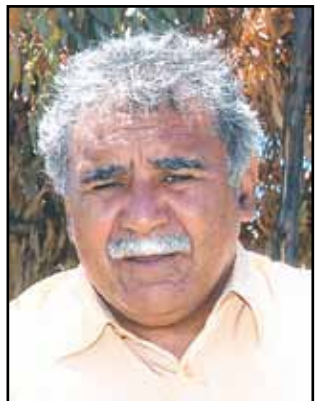
But when they started to put mission managers in and when they wanted to take the land back and all that, that was when I said, 'no, this is wrong'. Now I've come to the opinion that regardless what good things they may do, the bad far outweighs that and the Intervention must be scrapped as soon as possible.

Technically (the government has nullified the discriminatory aspects of the Intervention). They've passed laws where the welfare side of it can be extended to all people in Australia, but they haven't implemented it. That's just a ruse.

The whole thing needs to be thrown out. The government, if it is serious and I sometimes doubt it is, needs to sit down with the Elders in the communities and work out what works for each community and they need to put the CDEP back.

I've attended government meetings and they speak in their own language, their own bureaucratic language. They go in there with the solutions already made up. So they're not interested in what other people have to contribute. Their idea of consultation and ours are worlds apart.

Michael Anderson



No, I didn't support it. First of all, they were going to a 1940s-1950s law. It was a reversion back and it's a shame Australia doesn't follow the same policies as they do in Europe where they must be on guard for this sort of tyranny and racism and racial targeting by a dominant group.

What I found alarming is that I grew up in the 50s and 60s, in the latter part of that period when people were still imprisoned in NSW. I grew up as a young fella being observed and monitored by police, with my mum going around the police station getting money from her child endowment, because it was all controlled by the state.

And she wasn't given money, she was given an order written out by the police and the only place you could use it was the Chinese shop. So, what I saw was a return to this sort of practice.

In a free and dominant society, in a commercially industrious society, this sort of policy is quite alarming actually.

The demand for leases is where the dictatorship pops in, in a sense that's what free, democratic society says to people; 'look, we will build the

infrastructure for you', which is the common right of everybody, 'but, we are not going to do it for you because we want to control your land, so we have security over the assets that we put there'.

But the thing is, you see, Aboriginal people are so demoralised because of the history of oppression and the continuation of these oppressive rules.

Aboriginal people, sure they want these things, sure they're desperate for it and of course when government says, 'sure, we'll do it for you on condition that you do this', well then some of the old people are saying, 'well, if we want it we gotta take it'.

If you look at the older ones who have connection to their country proper, they are the ones who are saying, 'No, this is our homeland, we'll struggle it, we'll wait and we'll survive through hardship as we've done in the past. But you've got educated young Aborigines now who are saying, 'let's take the deal now and let's negotiate our way out of it. But it is like the British taking Hong Kong for 99 years, developing it and then not wanting to give it back. I find it extraordinary.

But what I absolutely detest about this thing is that there are so many hidden agendas in relation to mineral access.

I'll do an analogy for you. The Australian government, through John Howard, when they were amending the Native Title legislation and they were looking for that 10-point plan, which Fisher called 'bucket loads of extinguishment', some of the things I've found in my research in looking for commercial and industry advice was a statement written by 'Nugget' Coombs where he commented on the Native Title Ten-Point plan. And what he said in that book was that this was a Native Title Act written for mining companies and not for Aborigines.

I found advice by the Samuel Griffiths Society, some legal advice, concerns that were being expressed to John Howard at the time. One was: 'Please refrain from any affirmation of mineral ownership by the Crown in these amendments, because it sets up a liable claim by Aborigines to compensation should they use the argument, and succeed on the question of sovereignty.

If the government is forcing the taking of 40 year and 99 year leases, but then trying to force Aboriginal people to move off the land and into hub towns, what's the point?

They're clearing the land. It's a process of clearing the land like they did in the old days when they first settled here and they were expanding the colony and they were going beyond the limits.

They were finding all this beautiful pastoral land, so they went into a practice of clearing the land. Except that it isn't pastoral land, it's uranium and iron ore, we have a repetition of the history of clearing the land of blacks.

They're going to confine the people into these hub centres, then they'll have military jurisdiction like they do in the Northern Territory Intervention and they have civil police there to cover up the fact that this is in fact a marshal law declaration.

They're moving Aborigines off the land so they don't have

to deal with them when the mining comes in to rip open their land.

Before he left office Joh Bjelke Petersen said that if Australia wasn't careful with the way it dealt with Aborigines on land rights that the Aborigines would become the Arabs of Australia. That they would become rich and powerful.

ACT

Karen Demmery



I think it's a bad thing because we know from history that this type of control over Aboriginal people just seems to make matters worse. So, while they're wanting to have a better outcome for everybody, the way they're going about it is not an empowering way for Aboriginal people.

The majority of the people this affects are women, because it's the women who go and do the shopping. When you're disempowering the most powerful people in our community, which is the women, I think that's a really bad place to start.

And I don't know whether it is just about how this started. I think it is bigger than just trying to fix the health of Aboriginal people. I think that the government has been a little bit sneaky in what it is doing. I think it is around land control.

When it comes to the Northern Territory they are sitting on a lot of resources and in some of the communities the programs that they have working are working really well, so there are other things that the government could have done that wasn't so controlling that the government wouldn't even consider with any other nationality in this country.

Mick Dodson



No, I do not support the Intervention because my main concern was that it breached the Racial Discrimination Act, apart from a range of other things, no consultation, it was imposed, the list is endless.

My main concern about the whole thing has been around the breach of human rights, because I have a fundamental position that public policy should not be based on violation of human rights.

The government claims that it has fixed problems with the Racial Discrimination Act.

I don't agree with that. I agree with the Social Justice Commissioner on this.

I understand there was consultation, but I don't think they can claim they were effective.

I don't think this public policy approach can produce anything much that's positive. It's probably easier to measure its negative effects.

I think that there has got to be a proper approach based on community development and principles that respects not only international human rights obligations that Australia has, but also in particular the principles that are enunciated in the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People.

The government didn't have to adopt an approach regarding forced leases. The problem with this is the compulsion. The Northern Territory Land Rights Act already allowed for Traditional Owners to freely consent if they wished, to these things. It removes that consent. It's a violation of rights.

But I don't have a problem with income management as long as people freely consent to it.

Mick Gooda



Key elements of the Intervention remain racially discriminatory.

To be consistent with the Racial Discrimination Act measures relating to the management of land must be taken with the consent of the landowners.

Therefore, the redesigned provisions regarding the five-year leases remain inconsistent with the Act in this respect.

The absence of consent and inadequate consultation brings into question the government's characterisation of the leases as special measures.

The five-year leases don't fit the bill.

The Australian government did not appear to approach the consultations on the redesigned NTER (Intervention) measures with the objective of obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of the peoples affected.

It appeared as if the government had a predetermined outcome in mind in entering into the consultations and was not truly open to responding to the concerns of Aboriginal people.

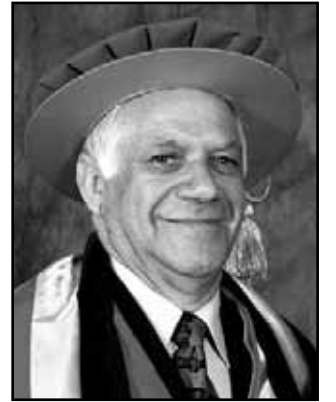
Governments need to change the way they do business if future consultations aren't simply going to be an exchange of information concerning a fixed, predetermined policy position.

I think the Commonwealth needs to work with Indigenous people to establish a framework for future engagement. It would apply across all federal ministries, departments and agencies.

But the Government firstly needs to purge the Intervention of its discriminatory measures.

Victoria

Alf Bamblett



Firstly you don't know and when you learn how things unfold, the hackles start to rise; 'what are they doing to our people?'

That whole sort of thing is about the insanity, the stupidity of a system that operates two laws at the one time and that says there's only one for everybody. So, interpretation of the law applies one way for one group of people and another way for another group of people. So the Intervention was racially discriminatory.

I've been involved in Aboriginal Affairs ... well I was born Aboriginal ... all my life, and the one thing that has been a sure and guiding signpost has been that if people don't own it, it ain't gonna work and when you saw that people backed away (from the Intervention) you said, 'hang on a minute, this ain't right'. You could see that you were going to have a whole heap of problems here.

Now, I know some people from up there ... and I know that it changed some things, and it gave some people things that they never had before, so maybe some people got a voice that they didn't have before, and that in itself isn't necessarily a bad thing. It depends on what the cost of that is to the way things have been operating there for all these thousands of years.

You don't want to be in a position where there are schisms or divisions created and people get played off against each other. You don't want things to happen that continually divide.

You see some (positive) things and there's probably been enough said about what people need to do. People have to be mindful about money, it's about making sure that the welfare and the wellbeing of the children becomes highlighted, so all the sorts of things that go with that are really important. It's done some of those things. The difficulties as I see it though, is that we have to be in a place where if you design a system, or if you design an approach, that you have got to have people to go make it happen. The more local mobs you can get in to make it happen, the better.

I think if you want to change the world you can probably start to do things in a different way. My thing has always been about Aboriginal community, and community ownership and participation. If that isn't happening then there isn't any choice for our mobs. Then what is it? It's that two law stuff, the interpretation of the law.

There was consultation in health. I know that, and there were a lot of people involved

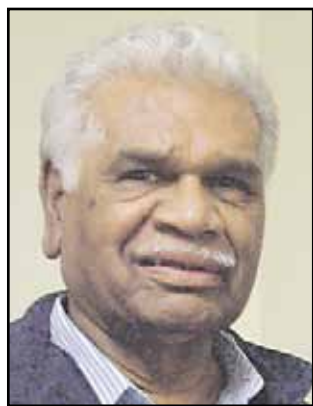
The Intervention: nation's community leaders have their say

... you've got to give people opportunity... but the way you do it is you go out, you talk with people, you put some ideas about the people together, they agree, this is what we said, this is what we're about, you go back, this is what it was, and then you repeat the process until people say, 'now I know what that is, now I know what that is', rather than fly in, and then you're gone again. And you wonder how many times people go back and cover the ground and make sure people understand.

I don't necessarily want to be negative. I don't live there. I've had some dealings in that part of the country for a long time with different groups and different people, long time in education, justice, child protection, but it's a different world in Melbourne.

The local mobs have to own it.

Reg Blow



I disagree with it all. I understand some of the sentiments behind it all, but the bottom line is: our kids are still being taken away, and perpetuating the idea that Aboriginal parents can't manage their children.

Now, in some respects I agree that some of our people have got issues that they are not dealing with themselves, so that is passed on to their children. But what needs to happen, is we've got to revert back to an old system where we've got our Elders in place, so that the Elders are the ones with the responsibility. I'm trying to set up a system in my own local government area, the City of Whittlesea. It is a system whereby the Elders are the ones who are taking on some of the responsibility of the parents. Because if the parents are alcoholic, and drug-affected, and there is all this sort of negative activity going on, they really need to be supported, and in doing that you support the children coming through. Because if you don't do it the children end up becoming exactly like the parents, and then they'll pass it on to their kids. So there has to be some intervention in place, but the intervention has to be within our own community.

There was limited consultation. I couldn't see Aboriginal people saying 'we're gunna handball youse the power to Lord it over us'. We're not silly, you know. We had systems in place for tens of thousands of years before this mob come along. But we operate from a system of sharing and caring with each other and the land. And that is the key. They've taken away our land, and it is cultural genocide like when you take the children away.

It demoralises our adults and parents and just perpetuates what has happened in this country since invasion began.

You haven't got much control if you're not in control, and they've dispossessed us without adequate compensation.

Terra Nullius has been denied by the courts, and yet for us to claim our land you've got to go back thousands of years and start singing your language, and know your history and culture, and the song lines, and all this stuff. We're urbanised people now.

The government had made the bar so high that no one could jump over it. You see, they hold all the cards, and we really have got pretty little to play with.

Tasmania

Michael Mansell



Why should anyone agree to a government targeting the most vulnerable and powerless group in the country leading up to an election and using that tactic as a means of getting votes.

It's a fundamental human right for everybody to have access to a whole range of goods and services and when those goods and services are not being properly delivered by government, it is the right of those people to complain to the government that those things are not being done properly.

It's not the moral responsibility of the government to say, 'well, we've failed but we're going to blame the victims' and just like the 'Children overboard' scam, John Howard was saying there's all this paedophile rings in Aboriginal communities, or drug-running, none of which was proved to be the case and none of which anyone believed anyway. So why would I agree with it?

We do know that throughout Australia, Aboriginal communities are in need of support. That is in a range of welfare programs, but it is also in relation to health, housing, all the basic facilities, but also the right of a distinct people to decide for themselves how best to get out of a situation that other people put us in.

In Julia Gillard's Close the Gap speech she called on Aboriginal people to take personal responsibility to close the gap. That was precisely what John Howard's tactic was, to blame the victim. It's the Noel Pearson, Marcia Langton stuff that came out of the United States; that whenever there's a welfare problem you blame the recipients of the welfare for the problem.

And if you look at Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, they've had their whole communities, they are a step away from the rest of us, they've still got a lot of traditional associations that are all to do with functioning of communities. Tribal law is not something to be put down by ignorant magistrates like what happened in Alice

Springs, or ignorant politicians, or other people who have complained about Aboriginal children being raped in the Northern Territory justifying the imposition of white law even more on Aboriginal communities to make us even more dysfunctional and so what needs to happen is that people need to be empowered, just as the white people in this country are empowered by state and regional governments.

In relation to 99 year leases before building houses and infrastructure to get certainty, Mr Mansell said: "So when they give BHP millions of dollars in subsidies for fuel, do they take the leases off BHP? When they give business grants out to the business community, do they take their businesses off them?"

That is why they had to suspend the Racial Discrimination Act; because it is blatantly discrimination. That Aboriginal people had to give up even more than we had to give up before to get what the rest of Australia takes for granted.

I think the so-called Intervention was founded on a rabbit-in-the-hat leading up to an election, (and) John Howard thought, 'if I can show the red-necks that I'm hard on Aborigines I will pick up the votes that will just get me over the line' and the Labor Party, then and now, was too intellectually weak to challenge Howard at it and they sided with him. Ever since then they've been too intellectually and politically weak to analyse their own behaviour and change the decision.

A lot of other people around Australia saw how wrong it was and spoke out about it but no one in the Labor Party could work it out. They were politically weak because they were so desperate to achieve power that they didn't care who they trod on to get it. And that says something about Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd.

Nala Mansell



I was very strongly against the Intervention when it was first put in place.

First of all it strips Aboriginal people of their basic human rights. It's racist, the policies are being forced upon Aboriginal people only and Aboriginal people who are living in Aboriginal communities. So, it's a race-based policy.

Over the past 200 years, Aboriginal people have been dispossessed and oppressed by the white man and today we continue to see the same sort of dispossession being forced upon Aboriginal people, such as the Northern Territory Intervention which aims to assimilate and oppress Aborigines even further.

It is important to acknowledge that if an Aboriginal community acknowledges that there are health issues or concerns that

they'd like to address then the government should support them to have Aboriginal community controlled organisations or employ Aboriginal Health workers who are able to deal with those sorts of issues.

I have been in contact with and spoken to lots and lots of different Aboriginal people that have been affected by the Intervention and have also seen lots of media releases from Aboriginal people who are against the Intervention.

I've heard people say there are some Aborigines in the Northern Territory who support the Intervention. I don't think they would be aware of the other options. If there are health issues in their communities, are those people aware that the government could provide funding to those communities so they can set up their own health organisations?

I think the lease situation is all about community control. The Aboriginal communities need to be the ones who have a total say over the services that they need in their communities, rather than the government making all the decisions for them.

Another thing that is a huge concern is Aboriginal people having to move out of their traditional homelands and being forced to assimilate into cities.

If an Aboriginal person lives in an Aboriginal community up in the Northern Territory, they're automatically having their welfare payments quarantined.

So a lot of Aboriginal people are being forced to move off their homelands and into cities, or out of the Intervention zones so they are no longer quarantined. It just reminds me of when white people came here with their assimilation policies, forcing Aboriginal people to assimilate into white society and move into the cities so they can live more like white people.

Aboriginal people are being forced to do that so that they don't have their basic human rights stripped from them.

I think the Government has shown from the start that it is totally race-based and to have to amend the Racial Discrimination Act just highlights how racist the government continues to be.

I would totally agree the Intervention should be scrapped. The future for Aboriginal people should be about self-determination and sovereignty rather than the white government forcing its assimilation policies and continuing to control the lives of Aboriginal people so that we become oppressed more than what we already are and dominated by the white government.

James Everett



I was totally against (the Intervention) because I was the Executive Officer to the

Indigenous Coordination Centre in Tasmania and from the inside I could see what they were doing. They were establishing a process for forcing Aboriginal people out of the remote communities into the fringes of cities. They were also doing things to demonise Wadeye and Mutujulu so they could justify moving the portfolio from Immigration and Indigenous Affairs into a welfare portfolio.

I haven't seen any change in attitude or approach between the Liberal and then Labor governments.

I can see no positive aspects to the Intervention. It is based on a demonising of Aboriginal communities, especially remote communities, but it has demonised Aborigines right across the nation and none of it is justifiable.

What it did bring home is that John Howard's policies were (to) remove Aboriginal people from the Cabinet's considerations, to remove Aboriginal Affairs from a portfolio status within government.

The Intervention is simply a Trojan horse to get the mineral and other resources from Aboriginal land.

All those things were developed by the previous government and haven't been changed by this Labor government.

Sadly I don't see much hope for Indigenous Affairs in the current climate.

This is the worst I've ever seen Aboriginal Affairs in Australia and I've been following it since 1969. I've

been physically active in Aboriginal Affairs over that time and this is the worst I've ever seen it.

Really, what's happening in Australia is the hardening of attitudes towards Aboriginal people caused firstly by the Howard government policies, then because no changes have been made by either Rudd or Gillard, in some way re-affirming those hardening of attitudes to Aboriginal people, that we have no rights unless we are assimilated. It's cultural genocide.

It is a hardening of attitudes across the entire community. The social attitudes of white Australia are hardening towards Aboriginal people to the point where Aboriginal people had better be very thoughtful about our visions for a future and how we protect ourselves; not just our philosophies, but also our physical beings.

A good place to go and see what sort of attitudes exist in this country is to go look at the blogs (web logs) at the Mercury newspaper in Tasmania. The Mercury newspaper has been very balanced in what it has been doing in relation to the Brighton bypass issue down here; 42 000 years of Aboriginal heritage which is about to be destroyed by a bridge that is about to be taken through that area. The blogs speak for themselves. The attitude of just what people are saying in those blogs by white Tasmanians gives an idea of just how much attitudes are hardening against Aboriginal people.

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NSW
GOVERNMENT

Planning

Heritage Council



of New South Wales

Aboriginal Heritage Advisory Panel

Community Member Representative – 4 positions

Applications are invited from people of Aboriginal descent for the positions of Community Member Representative on the Heritage Council of NSW Aboriginal Heritage Advisory Panel. Applicants should have a strong cultural association with their local area and Aboriginal community and a genuine interest in Aboriginal cultural heritage.

What does the role involve?

The Aboriginal Heritage Advisory Panel is responsible for:

- Providing advice to the Heritage Council of NSW on the development, evaluation and review of policies and programs for future directions of Aboriginal Heritage.
- Recommending applications for funding to the Heritage Council of NSW.
- Providing advice to the Heritage Council of NSW on proposed State Heritage Register Listings.
- Assisting in the co-ordination and participation of community consultations on matters for the NSW Department of Planning Heritage Branch.
- Assisting the Heritage Council to work with agencies and community bodies responsible for protecting Aboriginal heritage in NSW.

Selection Criteria:

- Relevant experience and/or qualifications in the areas of cultural heritage.
- Sound knowledge and understanding of the issues impacting Aboriginal cultural heritage matters.
- Proven ability to communicate effectively with Aboriginal people.
- Experience in consulting with Aboriginal communities and organisations.
- Ability to provide constructive advice on the development of new directions for Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW.
- Demonstrated ability to work within a committee or group.
- Willing to travel, energetic, motivated and flexible.

Sitting Fees are payable and the Department will fund travel and accommodation costs to attend meetings.

Enquiries and Information Packages: Tanya Koeneman on 9873 8534 or 1800 789 290 or email at tanya.koeneman@planning.nsw.gov.au

Applications should address the selection criteria, including a brief description of your work history, the names of two professional referees and a contact telephone number and email address.

Applications Marked 'Confidential' To: Tanya Koeneman, Senior Aboriginal Heritage Officer, NSW Department of Planning, Heritage Branch Locked Bag 5020 Parramatta NSW 2124 or emailed to tanya.koeneman@planning.nsw.gov.au

Applications close on: 25th March 2011

The Intervention: nation's community leaders have their say

South Australia

Klynton Wanganeen



I definitely think the Intervention should be scrapped and the government should work with the Aboriginal community and work through a process.

Basically I think the government could have dealt with some of those issues, first and foremost without setting aside the Racial Discrimination Act. I don't support the income management in a broad-brush approach and I think they could have consulted and planned a process with the Aboriginal people concerned.

A lot of the actual things that they could have done on the ground in communities and working with the communities in dealing with issues could have been done in conjunction with communities. Not imposing a broad-blanket approach to everything.

For example, they did go ahead and put in place income management. They could have done that in a voluntary process with people rather than imposing that right across the board.

The government should have actually got local Aboriginal people from the local community to get involved in the process and try to work through a process where (the people in need of assistance) get supported at the local level. The imposition of those things infringing on the individual human rights of the individual people.

I don't believe I've seen any evidence of real consultation in the past. From my recollection, Mutujulu was the first community they marched into and they were also the community that was at the centre of a lot of allegations and that was also the community that was rejecting a lot of what was said.

Since they actually started it as John Howard's last attempt to hold onto power, I don't recall, at any time, reading about communities giving their free, prior and informed consent. I know that when I did pay a visit to Yirrkala in Arnhem Land, just up from Nhulunbuy, people there were criticising the Intervention and the income management and they did not say they were consulted and had given free, prior and informed consent. I didn't ask them directly but the indications I got was that it was something that was imposed.

I am also yet to be convinced by anyone of the rationale behind (needing to sign 40 and 99 year leases to gain basic services). I still don't understand the rationale behind why they have to sign a lease just to get access to services on their community, in their land. You should be able to access the services.

If you look in other parts of Australia they're talking about 99 year leases and I think in South Australia they're talking about 40 year leases with Aboriginal communities here. I am yet to be convinced by anyone at the state or national level or federal government on the rationale or reasoning for it. I just don't understand it.

Aboriginal people will question the motives behind the policy of enforced leases.

They're talking about 40 year leases in communities here in South Australia. The resources here, in and around the majority of communities in South Australia are nowhere near the resources in Western Australia and the Northern Territory and we don't hold a lot of freehold land that actually has resources in it, so it's probably a different issue here, but I still don't see the rationale and I know that community members think it's a second round of dispossession.

I try not to get involved in things that are outside of my state, such as the Intervention, but I've heard of some Aboriginal people in communities talking about some of the positive aspects of income management, some of the positive aspects in terms of people not spending so much money on alcohol and the other things. But by and large, the Intervention and what it stands for is an infringement on their human rights and things and programs and cooperation and collaboration could have happened to work through to tackle issues if government worked with communities. I don't believe that the government has actually followed through with the individual recommendations in the report. I'm not sure how many of those recommendations they picked up and ran with.

To still have a broad-brush approach to income management that is imposed on a race of people that is not in place with the rest of the Northern Territory community is racially discriminatory.

Neil Gillespie



I have never agreed to the Northern Territory Intervention. This was a decision by the former Howard Government to access Aboriginal land for nuclear waste dumps.

The Intervention has nothing to do with protecting Aboriginal children. If it did then there would be an intervention in another jurisdiction (State) which has a far worse problem of child abuse. I understand the mammoth amount of legislation for the Intervention was drafted well before the Northern Territory Government report was tabled.

I suggest this is part of the institutionalised discrimination that continues in 2011 against Aboriginal people.

The dollars wasted on the Intervention of paying highly paid consultants, etc as reported in the Adelaide Advertiser newspaper on February 28 could be better spent in educating Aboriginal people and providing access to justice.

Why hasn't the Government done something about the appalling incarceration rates in Australia of Aboriginal people as an example of the institutionalised discrimination in Australia?

I do not support the Intervention in 2011 because it is based upon a lie. The Government is doing now what should have been started 20 or 30 years ago. The lack of resources and basic services for our brothers and sisters in the Northern Territory is a disgrace.

Nothing within the Intervention gives me confidence. It degrades Aboriginal people.

My understanding is the Government has not been open with its reasons for the Intervention. All the Government had to do was negotiate with the traditional owners. It also should have been providing services to Aboriginal peoples without relying upon falsehoods.

Going forward I suggest the Government should be honest and upfront with the Aboriginal community and also with the wider community. We as a nation deserve to have honest and trustworthy politicians. Following the Howard years we appear to be now moving towards honesty and trust within Government.

Prof Peter Buckskin



I'm not in support of any program or policy that needs to be implemented with the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act. If you have to suspend the Racial Discrimination Act it's fundamentally flawed then in my view. And the fact that it wasn't done in consultation with the community, I think, ensured that it was always going to have a difficult implementation, therefore success was always going to be limited to really what was in control of government.

Some of the concrete effects on people had been on their psyche, on their mental health, and the way they were treated and disempowered in terms of not being given the support to build functional lives, but to be blamed for their situation and therefore have punitive measures put in place.

I think shopping with (the BasicsCard) in Alice Springs or in Darwin, having seen it, is embarrassing. I think it's an embarrassing thing; people lined up at certain registers, and people getting very frustrated because they have to

use a card; have to put things back if they're not the right product they're allowed to buy, or they're over their limit. I think it is a real retrograde step in terms of the relationship between governments and our communities. I think there must have been, and I thought there would have been, a smarter way to deal with the terrible issues that were identified in the Little Children Are Sacred report. I'm sure there are other ways to address these issues in consultation with people in terms of building their capacity; to be able to deal with it, and to ensure it never happens again.

(The Minister's office) really need to define what they mean by consultation, since they were probably informing people of policy. From all the accounts that were referred to me, or people informing me, they were mainly information sessions. Negotiation and consultation is totally different to just informing people that this is what the government plans to do.

When you look at the situation in Alice Springs with people flooding into the township of Alice Springs with the continued physical violence that's happening, you can only draw the conclusion that there's a real failure of public policy when it comes to building capacity and building a sense of optimism and hope in the eyes of Aboriginal Territorians. That kind of dysfunctional violence and behaviour on each other, and possibly on themselves is a real strong indication that something is drastically wrong in terms of the capacity to live a fulfilling life.

The right to have schools, hospitals and houses "are citizenship rights, they shouldn't be negated by people having their land forcibly removed or put into agreements that further dislocate people from country".

Why do you need to acquire land to ensure that people are getting citizenship rights of appropriate schooling, appropriate health services, appropriate security services in terms of police stations, and housing, a fundamental right to shelter, and having to give up land for that purpose when no other Australian is asked to do that?

Western Australia

Kado Muir



I've never supported the Intervention. I don't believe that it's an effective measure to actually do anything. Essentially, it's a knee-jerk reaction to a long history of neglect by the government in its ability to deliver services.

There certainly is a problem. And the problem has been that government has not been effectively delivering services and engaging with Aboriginal people.

My concern that comes particularly to mind would be (Prime Minister) Gillard's recent statement in relation to the Closing the Gap report (where the PM said Indigenous people had to take their share of responsibility for closing the gap).

It's basically a broad-brush-stroke approach and I think the Intervention was a lot of hype and that same sort of attitude, where basically Intervention on the one hand is an over-reaction and then Gillard's approach in the Closing the Gap statement is; 'just in case we fail in closing the gap, we're going to lump you black fellas with the responsibility'.

The lease issue is just a massive land-grab and that's essentially what drove the Intervention in the first place. You go back and look at the coalition government philosophy to Aboriginal Land Rights and that is essentially the agenda dressed up in this blanket of saying we're looking after women and children. You don't need land tenure to be looking after women and children, that should be a given in any society in which we live in. It's basically a land grab trying to dispossess Aboriginal people once again.

This is the thing that gets up my nose about Gillard's statement. This is essentially what's happening in Australian history; they've come in, stolen all the land in the first wave stolen all the men, the leaders. Rottnest Island is a classic case of that where 3000 Aboriginal leaders from across the state were basically sentenced in exile.

Then they go around and steal all the kids, essentially what is akin to this is knocking someone down on the ground, putting your foot on their throat and saying; okay guys, you have to take responsibility for your own stuff now and start dealing with it all.

The Intervention is essentially an attempt to wind back the land rights wins of Aboriginal people. What they're essentially doing is they're not giving people the ability to manage their own affairs and not giving people the opportunity to develop economic returns from their land.

And when you're economically handicapped, you're not able to get on with the rest of your life. So the productivity levels on Aboriginal communities are appalling because people are basically sitting down, responding to government pressures and government needs and not able to get on with the life of living and creating a life for their family.

There are people who actually need to have some control over their spending habits but I think a blanket income card is not an effective way to manage people's income and I think more energy and effort needs to be put into helping and supporting people to be able to take responsibility for their own actions.

What it fundamentally boils down to is that it is basically another 'ration card'. It is a sad statement on the current state of Australia where Aboriginal people have gone through the days of getting rations: tea, flour and sugar and we're back to the same spot.

Sure, there's questions about human rights, there's

questions about human dignity, there's questions about taking responsibility for looking after your family. We need to get back to core Aboriginal values and those core values are around everybody in your family looking after each other and that's the fundamental thing.

So, as Aboriginal people we need to not be distracted by everyone else's views and opinions, but go back to our cultural values and deal with the world from that basis.

Wayne Bergmann



Any government intervention that takes away traditional owner's or Aboriginal community's power and responsibility to determine their own future is to be a concern for anybody because history has shown that Indigenous people ever since 1788 have always been disempowered and oppressed by the colonial powers. This kind of intervention, intervention that does not empower people that they control only exacerbates the problem and creates further dependency for interventions in the future.

The real issue is that we need to deal with underlying causes and not put bandaids on the symptoms.

To create a sustainable outcome, I believe the only way to deal with the major concerns of wellbeing for children and the community at large, is that you have to do the hard work and engage with the people as a whole.

One would have to question the government conducting their own consultation, to verify their own means. Any consultation dealing with this matter would have to be totally independent of government and should be conducted by relevant outside bodies who have experience engaging with Indigenous people. Because clearly, there's a huge conflict over whether this is right or if it is wrong. There's a huge tension within the community.

Someone has to question the true motives (of the forced leases and the clearing of people out to hub towns). You've got to have a valid purpose. The rights of children and individuals is paramount. Liberalism is about protection of individual freedoms.

In the Kimberleys there is a huge level of anxiety about the government bringing in the troops to take over the way they run their communities. People are concerned that they live in a police state where eventually, if the government doesn't get its way they'll bring in the troops to take over the way they run and govern their communities. People are very proud of who they are and want the tools and the power to deal with their problems.

The Intervention: nation's community leaders have their say

Northern Territory

Rosalie Kunoth-Monks



The Intervention is destroying our communities.

It has taken away our rights and failed to deliver proper services. The pain of the whole thing has destroyed quite a large number of my family on Utopia.

It has left us with no functioning housing and very little infrastructure. The legislation under which we now live does not comply with international law.

It is discriminatory and we are no longer equal to other Australians.

Rev Dr Djinyini Gondarra



This is a Trojan Horse to obtain our lands.

They have used the Intervention to get what they really wanted, our land. The Labor government is worse than the Liberal Government with what is happening.

It is a real tragedy where people surrender their land to the government. But we are not going to do that.

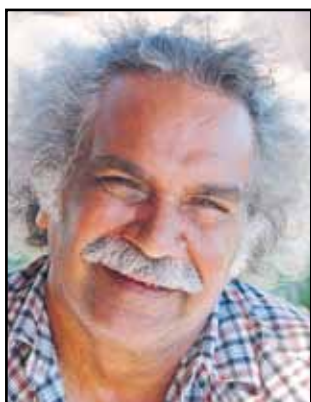
We believe the Federal Government and the Northern Territory Government is using the Intervention as an excuse.

Aboriginal communities are communities where there are a lot of rich minerals and other resources the government wants to use.

But the communities and the land were established with the government under freehold titles where Aboriginal people can continue to exercise control through the permit system.

It was established that only through the permit system could miners and others come onto our land.

Maurie Japarta Ryan



Yes, the intervention should be scrapped. I'm on the Intervention. The BasicsCard: I wear it around my neck as a chain. I am one of 10,000 in the Northern Territory Indigenous First Nations people.

The Intervention is racist and it violates human rights of Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. The parliament of Australia is a signatory to the elimination of racism.

So every member of both houses of parliament in August 2007; that includes the Prime Minister at that time, John Howard as well as Mal Brough, everybody in the House of Representatives stand condemned by me as the founder of the First Nations political party and as one who is on the BasicsCard. It violates human rights.

It has done good by employing another mass of bureaucrats but it has not helped Aboriginal people at all.

Part of the problem when you look at Alice Springs today the urban drift of Aboriginal people from the Northern Territory. It is racist when you look at Aboriginal people. You can't go past that and everybody in both houses of parliament except the Greens and Democrats who did not vote.

Let's get it right. Half your money goes into a bank account and half goes into the BasicsCard. With the BasicsCard you cannot buy alcohol or grog or illicit drugs. All they have is about \$200 to \$260 to buy food with the BasicsCard and then they have \$200-odd to buy what they want. Culture has broken down in a lot of communities. To me, the problem is compounded by people in Canberra who have no understanding of Aboriginal Society.

Jenny Macklin has not consulted widely with all of the affected communities. All they did was trap 10,000 people of Aboriginal and Islander descent in the Northern Territory. It was easy to do at a tune of \$300 million. Nothing's changed in remote communities. Some people hold on to their money, some people share with family members.

They talked about rolling back the Racial Discrimination Act, but if you did it to every Australian, every white Australian, then ask me that question, because you're violating human rights and in remote communities my people are the most disenfranchised. Where they live and the cost of food is 180 per cent compared to where people live in the cities and larger towns of the Northern Territory.

Leases is another example.

Do they (the government) have leases over Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth or Brisbane? No, they don't. They're providers and that's the responsibility of all governments, State and Federal, to deliver the services of health, housing and employment. They are renegeing on what they are supposed to be doing. They don't get white people to sign leases in the town for services.

Getting access to mineral resources on Aboriginal land is what it is all about. It's not about the Little Children are Sacred report. It's about the resources that the people who control governments; the mining companies who access minerals in the ground worth

billions and billions of dollars. That's what it's all about.

So what they did with moving people in and putting this thing on us was nothing but a furphy. It was about access to the minerals under the ground. I totally agree with the Reverend Djinyini. I've said that all along.

The Aboriginal people of Australia, the Traditional Owners of this country have not received what they should have since 1770; back-rent in the first place, of this country. This country has made a lot of people millionaires off the backs of Blacks; off their land. Australia is one hell of a racist country. It doesn't share in the equity at all.

Alison Anderson



Get rid of it and make sure the money goes back into remote Aboriginal communities, and not to agencies and government in towns and regional centres like Alice Springs, Darwin, Katherine. The money has to go back directly to Aboriginal communities, and to tell them to get rid of their Gingerbread Men (the Government Business Managers) too.

I was for it. You could see the results with the health checks, and push for education, and that is really, really important. I said last year (in the media) that the intensity of the Intervention was slowed down by Rudd and Macklin, and it's no longer appropriate.

When I first supported it, I just saw the collapse of service delivery. All you've got is what we call Gingerbread Men sitting on big wages in communities doing nothing. There are no houses being built.

The health checks are something really, really good that's come out of it. The health checks for our children and the future of our Aboriginal kids. They're being diagnosed with anaemia, poor diet, and I thought that was one really good part of the Intervention. The fact that kids started going to school. If you take a school like Hermannsburg where the attendance rate went up to nearly 95 per cent. That's just fantastic. In other communities it's had a slower increase, 5 per cent, 10 per cent, 15 per cent but still an increase. I'm talking about my electorate.

The minister said there was wide consultation, but that is not true, not true whatsoever. She might have consulted with her counterparts in the Northern Territory, and certainly in some communities, but Jenny Macklin nor her bureaucrats have been down at the grass-level talking to Aboriginal people. They're not actually consulting, they're going around telling people, because it is more important for them (the NT government) to get the money through the National Partnership agreement that they have with the Feds. So that money, we all know today, they

divert into other areas.

(The Intervention) is total rubbish now and they just need to get rid of it and let people go back to their lives. I think what you need is people to decide now what they want. I think this kind of stuff has failed miserably, and I think we need to get back to not telling people, but allowing people to speak out and say what they want.

The money has to go back into the remote Aboriginal communities rather than giving it to the bureaucrats in town.

If you have a look at it, I'll tell you from an evidence-based situation. If you have a look at the 99-year lease on Tiwi Island. Those people signed off a 99-year lease with the Northern Territory and Federal governments, now the Northern Territory government is refusing to pay rent on those people's land, when the original agreement quite clearly states they're suppose to pay these people rent for the health department being there, the police being there, the teachers being there and all that kind of stuff. Now they're renegeing on their own deal.

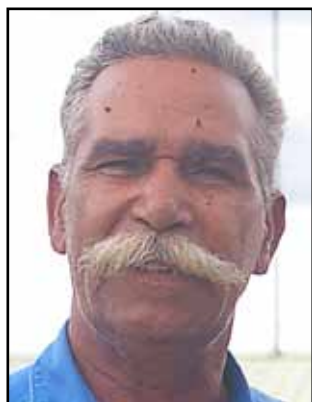
The communities up in my area never had police stations, and they got police stations through the Intervention which means basically the community was safer for women and children and people with a disability.

The police stations are a good thing, and that really highlighted all the stuff that governments have done to communities that have failed.

The federal government had given the money to the Northern Territory government, and the Northern Territory government and the Federal government together can't even find two police to man a police station.

It defeats the purpose of safety that these people wanted. And this is what we're up against all the time; a change of policy by the so-called knowledgeable people in Canberra there who have no idea what's happening at the grass-roots.

Richard Downs



At that time I was in Western Australia and once they imposed the Intervention that was when my Elders and leaders called me to come back and have a look at it and see what we could do, because they weren't happy with the way it was pushed and thrown onto the community.

The federal government, Mal Brough and John Howard and the rest of the cronies and red-necks, ignored the recommendations in the Little Children are Sacred report. The main thing they ignored was engagement and consultation. They didn't do any of that. They came straight into the Territory through Mutujulu and said, 'look, we're going to do all this for you because there's sexual abuse of children happening

throughout the Northern Territory'.

It's a sham. You can see that in the mining exploration licences. Once they took away our permit system then they were free to let in mining companies to do exploration. That's what it was for.

The creation of those 20 hub towns was to remove people from homelands into those major communities so it frees up those homelands for mining and for further cattle and pastoral sections.

A lot of our people are moving away from homelands into Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and into major townships because they've been informed by the Northern Territory government that there'll be no more development or infrastructure built on homelands anymore; that people are going to have to make a choice to move into one of these 20 hub towns or into townships.

The hub towns dispossession is their tactic and it's working because people are leaving homelands and moving into towns. They've got more access now with the BasicsCard through the shops and the major communities only provide just some basic services through the community stores. We got nothing out in the townships.

I see nothing. No positive aspects at all. It's imposed, it's what the government's been doing to us for over 220 years. 'We know what's good for you'. 'We know what's best for you and this is the way we're going to do it.' It's not about coming to us and saying, 'we want to hear your ideas, we want to look at a way forward with you people engaging with us right from the word go.'

Instead they've shut off and isolated people like myself and other leaders that can be another player. It's not consulting, it's telling people, 'this is what the government is going to do'.

It's just about tokenism. It was never about consultation or engaging and a two-way partnership.

They've been planning that for over the past ten years, John Howard came in with it and the Labor Party supported it and they've been running with it ever since.

After the election, Aboriginal people right across Australia and particularly in the NT backed off and said, 'let's wait and see what the Labor Party will do with the Intervention'. And first there was the Apology, which has just blown away in the wind now. And what we were expecting them to do was go back through the NT, look at the Intervention policy and really engage and consult with the people and start again. And they didn't do that.

Torres Strait Islands

Gail Mabo

I didn't support the Intervention because I thought they were just sticking their beaks in where it wasn't wanted.

No, the Little Children Are Sacred report was not handled correctly, what they should have done was actually work with the people to solve their own problems not go 'okay, we're gonna lump you all in one same basket, and we're gonna do the same thing to all of you, and we're gonna get



all these people in to come to some understanding of what the problem is, but they just didn't talk to people. Because they didn't talk to people, I think that's why everything was doomed to fail.

If you start pointing the finger at someone and belittling them they don't value themselves.

Traditionally those people in the communities who were doing these things would have been dealt with correctly (under the law) but because of that thing of some 'higher authority' saying we know how to deal with this thing, we'll flush them out', but they didn't they just sent them diving for cover, and they've gone somewhere else.

With the 40-year and 99-year leases it became the thing of 'we're going to give you this piece of paper. You sign it, and if you don't conform to what we want you to, we're going to take it off you'. So, that's all that was, it was to hijack the communities into the thing of losing their land for 40 years or for 99 years. Does that mean that the government can do with that land whatever it likes? So then the government can bring in what they want. They want to survey that land so they can see what mineral wealth is under the surface, providing all this land to the highest bidder that might be a mining company who wants what is underneath.

In the consultations that FaHCSIA claim they had all over the affected communities, was there someone there to explain culturally, in their own language what was going to happen? Because if there was just a white fella there in front of them saying, 'okay, this is what's going to happen, would you agree on that?', and they're just going to go, 'yeah okay', and then turn to their mate and say 'what did he just say?' They'll have said yes to acknowledge they've heard him, and the white fella will take it as consent. If they're not given all the information in their own language system, they're not going to fully understand it. If there is no cultural sensitivity in consultation, it isn't consultation at all.

The National Indigenous Times approached a number of other prominent Indigenous leaders who chose not to respond because of work commitments or that they were uncomfortable with commenting on the Intervention issue.

Included in this list were: Linda Burney, Noel Pearson, Hannah McGlade, Bess Price, Tanya Major, Russell Taylor and John Paul Janke.

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