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SNAICC supports NT Elders’ plea for basic human rights

SNAICC supports the call by Northern Territory Elders and prominent Australians to stop the continuing policy failure and abrogation of human rights in the Northern Territory.

“SNAICC is proud to stand beside our NT brothers and sisters in calling for the Federal Government to respect basic human rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory,” SNAICC Chair Steve Larkins said today. “Three and a half years of erosion of self-determination and human rights through the NT Intervention continues to deny Aboriginal people a voice and a role. There is far from conclusive evidence that the Intervention is making a positive impact on our families and children and plenty of evidence of harm.”

SNAICC has long called for action in dealing with the complex issues of child welfare in the Northern Territory but short-term, unilateral, bureaucratic action without the active participation of Aboriginal people is futile. There is a growing body of evidence, especially from Canada showed a clear correlation between the level of control that First Nations people have over their lives and improved health, education and employment outcomes.

The National Framework for the Protection of Australia’s Children explicitly calls for the development of culturally appropriate responses based on partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, communities and organisations. The NT Intervention cannot foster true partnerships while so much of the policies are based on involuntary compliance, coercion, denial of human rights and little capacity for direct engagement with communities.

“The Federal Government and Opposition have an opportunity to right the wrongs of the intervention” said Mr Larkins. “I fully support the call for Minister Macklin to act now in complying with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, repeal the legislation that denies our children and families their basic human rights and fully restore the *Racial Discrimination Act*”.

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