

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

An alliance of the CLC, NLC, CAALAS, NAAJA and AMSANT

Reference Group Members
Welfare Review C/- Welfare System Taskforce
Department of Social Services
PO Box 7576
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

Via e-mail to: welfarereview@dss.gov.au

2 September 2014

Dear Mr McClure,

RE: APO NT's Submission to the Interim Report: A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes

Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the NT (APO NT) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Welfare Review and is grateful to the Welfare System Taskforce for granting an extension.

APO NT endorses the recommendations made by the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) to this review.

This submission draws on NAAJA's submission and on APO NT's submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs on the Social Services Bills (as attached).

The changes to the welfare system detailed in those Bills will have a detrimental impact on Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory; reducing levels of income support offered to Aboriginal people, who are widely acknowledged to experience significant disadvantage, poverty, ill health and disenfranchisement relative to non-Indigenous Australians, will run counter to Australia's efforts to Close the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage, particularly in areas with a weak labour market and a lack of job opportunities.

The Social Services Bills if implemented as proposed will:

- increase homelessness, poverty and social exclusion;
- reduce the amount of resources available for the care of children, including food;
- increase the already high non participation rate of young Aboriginal men;
- widen the gap in health; and
- increase social problems and dysfunction, including domestic and family violence in Aboriginal communities, by placing pressure on low income families with already limited resources.

The reforms do nothing to address the structural causes of disadvantage or create employment opportunities and will instead reduce the economic functionality of remote communities.

APO NT opposes the majority of the reforms contained in the Bills. However, if retained, we recommended that the Government introduce measures to ameliorate the impacts outlined above.

APO NT urges the Taskforce to consider, in particular, the impact of the Social Services Bills on Aboriginal people in its deliberations.

APO NT also urges the Taskforce to consider the substantive evidence and concerns around specific employment and welfare-related issues contained in APO NT's submission on the Social Services Bills, as these are directly relevant to the Taskforce's review.

If you wish to discuss any of the above in further detail, please contact Brionee Noonan by phone on (08) 8944 6672 or via e-mail to researchofficer.apont@amsant.org.au for further information.

Yours sincerely,



John Paterson
CEO
AMSANT, for:

David Ross Director CLC	Priscilla Collins CEO NAAJA	John Paterson CEO AMSANT	Patricia Miller CEO CAALAS	Joe Morrison CEO NLC
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