



INFORMATION PACK

For All Media Enquiries:

Mitch Torres +61481054829 (mitchtorres@hotmail.com)

Nawoola Miriwoong +61499557165: (nawoolaloonmi@gmail.com)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Official Links:

Website: www.sosblakaaustralia.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sosblakaaustralia

Twitter: [@sosblakaust](https://twitter.com/sosblakaust)

Instagram: www.instagram.com/sosblakaaustralia

Official Hashtags:

#SOSBLAKA AUSTRALIA

#NOconsent

#Lifestylechoice

10 points from the Communities of Western Australia

1. **The second Call to Action of 1 May 2015 is an official vote of NO CONFIDENCE** by the Aboriginal People of Australia to the incumbent LNP Federal Government under Prime Minister Tony Abbott and State Government of Western Australia under Premier Colin Barnett.
2. Under the Commonwealth of Australia's own Constitution, it states:
It is a violation of said constitution to impose ones will upon other people.
3. It is also against UN HUMAN RIGHTS LAW for any people to remove another people from their land. The Commonwealth of Australia signed up to this convention in 2009 and is accountable.

THE COMMUNITIES

4. Do not accept the terms, alleged rationale or reasoning upon which both Governments have presented.
5. Do not accept acts of dispossession, genocide and apartheid in the 21st Century on our Sovereign lands.
6. Demand transparency in the stated Government agenda.
7. Demand transparency in the relationship between Government and the mining interests of Australia.
8. Demand urgent consultation with Government by community leaders.
9. Call upon the greater Australian community to stand with us as we develop our own self-determined community led strategies to ensure community viability and tenure for our people.
10. Call upon the World to build profile to our plight as the Indigenous people of Australia.

CULTURAL CODE OF CONDUCT

As we are gaining momentum across the regions, states, nations and world-wide, we do so as proud people, representing our Ancestors who have come before us, Elders who are standing with us and the young people who hold our cultural continuum in their hands. The following is a cultural mandate that honours this responsibility and keeps us united.

1. Lead with Cultural Integrity.

We, the women of the Kimberley behind this campaign, each portray the humbleness and dignity that our Elders have instilled in us. We stand strong with our message and ask that our supporters lead with cultural integrity.

2. Stand together and alongside each other.

When marching in support of our effort toward the stopping of forced closures of Aboriginal Communities, we ask you to remember that you do so in the name of people who live in these regions. Be mindful that what you do positive or negative will impact on us greatly and the message we are intending to get out.

3. Keep our message clear.

We are standing together to stop the Forced Closure of Aboriginal Communities. Our official hashtags are #SOSBLAKA AUSTRALIA #NOconsent #Lifestylechoice.

4. Keep our focus.

National actions must have a strong combined focus, we need to keep to task and ensure our Aboriginal people will remain on their homelands. Let us hold our combined power and move together as one. Timing is everything.

5. Be Firm, yet non-violent.

We understand the importance of keeping our actions safe from harm, so that our children, disabled and Elders who are marching with us remain protected and respected. Acts of violence lose our message in the community – and to lose our message will mean all our marches will have been in vain.

6. Nurture your organisers.

Our organisers Australiawide have all volunteered and led their responses with enormous courage and resolve. If they are struggling or tired, step up and lovingly help them to take their place.

7. **Keep each other strong.**

We are all responsible for change we want to see in the world. Support your friends, family and colleagues regardless of race or social difference, as we educate, inform and action for a fair and just society.

8. **Be mindful.**

Not everyone thinks the same or understands the issues at hand. Agree to disagree and protect yourself from personal stress or trauma by not allowing the impact of your belief to lead you to harm or negativity.

9. **Understand the origin.**

This campaign began with West Kimberley people making a global call to action. It is not affiliated with 'Close the Gap' or other such campaigns. The origins are grassroots from the communities themselves.

10. **Check the facts.**

Spreading information without checking the facts or verify with the communities will create uncertainty for everyone and hurt the people and communities we are all trying to protect.

With almost 60,000 people and a reach of over 1.8million on one social media platform alone, help keep our message clear and respect our cultural code of conduct so that we can go beyond the mainstream media who will often turn a blind eye to Aboriginal people and work toward a better outcome for our people.

Official MEDIA RELEASES



MEDIA RELEASE

Date 15th March 2015

(for immediate release)

ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCE A GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION.



Kimberley Aboriginal communities have declared a **GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION** to stop the forced closure of Aboriginal communities within Western Australia amidst the growing campaign by State and Federal Governments to withdraw their support and remove Aboriginal people from their traditional homelands.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott has whipped up a great amount of fear, anxiety and doubt amongst the already marginalised First peoples of this nation when he said that *"What we can't do, is endlessly subsidise choices, if those lifestyle choices are not conducive to the kind of full participation in Australian society that everyone should have"*.

Abbott's statement was in support of the declarations made by Premier of Western Australia, Colin Barnett in a press statement released 12 November 2014, suggesting that the State could no longer support 150 Aboriginal Communities, flagging the prospective removal by the end of 2015.

We who live in the remoter areas of Australia do not believe it is a lifestyle choice but an intrinsic fundamental human right to live in our own communities and our own country. We hold significant cultural obligations to our Ancestors to maintain Sovereign ties to our lands. After successive breaches of Human Rights conventions and the forced removal of the Aboriginal Community of Oombulgurri in 2014, we maintain a vote of no confidence in both the incumbent State and Federal Governments in their actions toward Aboriginal people.

On **Thursday 19th March 2015**, Australians across the Nation are being asked to celebrate Close the Gap Day – but for many of our countrymen the gap has been significantly widened placing increasing pressure and trauma on our people. Starting in the Kimberley at 10am, we will march not for this Government agenda, but instead to show our objection to the threatened proposed closures to Aboriginal communities.

We stand in solidarity with all other regions in Western Australia and South Australia who have the veil of threatened remote community closures hanging over their lives and understand that the precedent for a National attack by Government toward Aboriginal people living on their homelands, has already been set in the Oombulgurri closure. We ask the National and International community to stand with us in this action, and the subsequent actions that will ensue as we mobilise effective campaigns to secure our cultural right and entitlement.

For All Media Enquiries Contact: Jodie Bell +61418094287(Jodie.bell@gme.com.au)
| Mitch Torres +61481054829 (mitchtorres@hotmail.com)

www.sosblakaustralia.com | www.facebook.com/sosblakaustralia | Twitter: @sosblakaust

Official Hashtags: #SOSBLAKAUSTRALIA #NOconsent #Lifestylechoice

MEDIA RELEASE

Date 22nd March 2015

(for immediate release)

ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES SEND A POWERFUL MESSAGE TO GOVERNMENT.



Aboriginal Communities across every state and territory of Australia send a powerful message to the Premier of Western Australia and Prime Minister of Australia.

Kimberley Aboriginal Women took the lead with support from their men folk in sending a powerful message to the Premier of Western Australia Colin Barnett after they instigated a call for a national day of support to the wider Australian nation. The call to action held around Australia on Thursday 19th March resulted in a massive show of support registering collectively more than 20,000 people marching in remote communities, towns and cities. The outpouring of support via social media has resulted in a reach of over 1million people worldwide and continues to grow as awareness spreads. This outcome furthers the feeling and sentiments of the Kimberley community that they will not accept Premier Collin Barnett's plan to shut off essential services to 150 remote Aboriginal communities in Western Australia, ultimately forcing them into closure.

The sentiments expressed by local Kimberley, Pilbara, Murchison, Goldfields and South Australian people and supported by the actions throughout the state of WA and indeed across the nation, ranged from fear of uncertainty about which communities would be closed, to questions about what criteria the state would use to justify cutting of essential services, to outright objection of the Premier's plan, saying that they will not be moved off their homelands under any circumstance and citing that his plans would be a step backward in reconciliation and moreover a playing out of historical policies of further marginalising and disenfranchising Aboriginal people again.

Local Shire President of Broome Graham Campbell who spoke at the Broome event weighed into the discussion stating that even the local Shires of the Kimberley were not in the consultation process to date and were very concerned about the social flow on effects that may eventuate due to displacement of community people targeted in the direct outcome of the Premier's plans.

Two key messages that came from the Kimberley Aboriginal community were that the:

- Government, either State or Federal need to consult and create an open and transparent conversation with Aboriginal people within the State / Region / Communities they are targeting for closure.

And:

- Current influential leaders of the Kimberley must create solidarity, to unite and be one voice to represent the Kimberley region in order to present solutions to the issues that affect the region, and that these influential leaders must include their strong Aboriginal women leaders in this process prior to engaging in conversations with the State or Federal Government.

The Kimberley Aboriginal Women will be meeting with the Local MLA for Labor, Josie Farrer next week to discuss a community closure strategic plan. Organisers across the states (WA and SA) will also work on strategic action to take in order to open the discussion with their local State Government representatives.

MEDIA RELEASE

Date 27th April 2015

(for immediate release)

MOMENTUM GROWS AS THE 2nd GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION IS POISED TO SEND A CLEAR MESSAGE TO GOVERNMENT.



Over seventy communities across the world will converge on 1 May 2015, to send a strong message to the State Government's of Western Australia (WA), South Australia (SA) and the Federal Government of Australia in a stand against the threatened forced closure of Aboriginal Communities. From large scale marches in every State and Territory across the Country, smaller gatherings in the regional areas nationwide, to international actions in Canada, United States, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Germany, United Kingdom, France amongst others, these peaceful actions make it clear that a growing consensus of everyday people support Aboriginal communities to remain in their homelands.

This is alongside the backing of the Unions with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) making public statements and holding events expressing their sentiments while affirming their continuing support of Aboriginal Australians. On 1 May 2015, they too will show support by marching in solidarity across the nation in key locations.

Federally, political pressure has come not only from a tri-partite domestic condemnation by the Greens, Labor and Democrats, but also internationally from the Maori Party in New Zealand with a strongly worded letter addressed to the Prime Minister Tony Abbott on his recent visit to New Zealand. On 1 May 2015, co-leader of the Maori Party, Marama Fox will be attending the Melbourne Rally, in solidarity for Indigenous Australia.

State-based Kimberley MLC Labor's Josie Farrer and the Greens MLC Robyn Chapple have continued in their public denouncement of the Premier's plans citing that they will in a show of bi-partisanship and continue to question Premier Barnett. They will take the concerns of their Kimberley constituents to the Western Australian Parliament until this issue is resolved, and lobby for the State to move into a consultation process to dispel the uncertainty and get on with the job of creating solutions.

Action from the Kimberley have been local and global. Since March 19, there has been two round table discussions and a group of Kimberley Aboriginal Leaders are poised to meet with Government State Government to seek clarification and transparency. Significantly, on April 22, the Kimberley Land Council (KLC) condemned Aboriginal community closures in Western Australia to widespread international support at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York.

The outpouring of support via social media has resulted in a reach of over 1.8 million people worldwide. This carries with it the message from Aboriginal people, that we do not accept Premier Barnett's plan to shut off essential services to 150 remote Aboriginal communities and we do not support the role the Federal Government has in enabling this. There is growing concern that the incumbent government of WA has changed their language in recent weeks about community closures, which were cited as being a fiscal issue to now being one of a child protection issue. The Kimberley Community is saying they need to know why the Premier is targeting their community homelands and make it very clear will continue to stand against any effort to erode our fundamental human rights.

For All Media Enquiries Contact: Nawoola Miriwoong +61499557165:

(nawoolaloonmi@gmail.com) | Mitch Torres +61481054829 (mitchtorres@hotmail.com)

www.sosblakaaustralia.com | www.facebook.com/sosblakaaustralia |

Twitter: [@sosblakaust](https://twitter.com/sosblakaust) | Instagram: www.instagram.com/sosblakaaustralia

Official Hashtags: #SOSBLAKAUSTRALIA #NOconsent #Lifestylechoice

Supporting MEDIA RELEASES





TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL CENTRE INC.

ABN 48 212 321 102

HEAD OFFICE:

198 ELIZABETH STREET,
G.P.O. BOX 569,
HOBART TAS. 7001
Phone: (03) 6234 0700
Fax: (03) 6234 0799
Email: hobart@tacinc.com.au

182 CHARLES STREET,
P.O. BOX 531,
LAUNCESTON TAS. 7250
Phone: (03) 6332 3800
Fax: (03) 6332 3899
Email: launceston@tacinc.com.au

53 ALEXANDER STREET,
PO. BOX 536,
BURNIE TAS. 7320
Phone (03) 6431 3289
Fax: (03) 6431 8363
Email: burnie@tacinc.com.au

PRESS RELEASE

Aboriginal Communities Announce a National Day of Action On Thursday 19 March

“All Aboriginal Communities around Australia plan a Day of Action on Thursday 19th March in protest against the Western Australian Liberal government’s intention to stop funding to 150 WA remote Aboriginal communities. The direct consequence of this will be to force the removal of the Aboriginal people in those communities from their homes and lands”, said Trudy Maluga, State Secretary.

“In Tasmania, Aborigines and supporters will march from Princess Square, Launceston at 11:30 am to the office of MHR Andrew Nickolic at 100 St John Street, Launceston to hand him our letter urging his leader Prime Minister Tony Abbot to reverse this terrible injustice”, said Miss Maluga.

“This plan is a clear form of the White Australian Policy, forcing people who prefer living their chosen life style on their own lands toward assimilation into white society. It is easy to recognise the possible removal as a land grab to enable the areas to be mined. ”

“Many voices in Australian society, not just Aborigines, have already spoken out against Prime Minister’s throwaway line that the essential connection between Aborigines and our land is a “life style choice”. This callous assertion is disrespectful, inhumane and unjust. WA Premier Barnett and PM Abbott appear to not understand that Aborigines are human beings, not objects to be moved around at the whim of governments, and with rights under international laws to which Australia has signed up.

“We call upon PM Abbot to show himself a true leader and provide those WA communities with the resources needed for them to remain on their own lands. One obvious source of revenue could come from stopping wasting tax payers money on a constitutional referendum which is going nowhere and is deeply unpopular with Aboriginal communities across the country and transferring those funds to the WA remote communities so they can remain in their homes on their land”, said Miss Maluga

Trudy Maluga
State Secretary
Mobile: 0419519080

18 March 2015

Thursday 26, March 2015

Union movement condemns forcible closure of Aboriginal communities

The ACTU Executive has voted unanimously to condemn the Abbott and Barnett Governments' moves to forcibly close Aboriginal communities in Western Australia.

Unions call on the Abbott Government to restore funding for Aboriginal communities and the Barnett Government to end the political funding games and work with communities to maintain their connection to traditional lands.

Australian Unions will support campaigns driven by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The union movement has a proud history of standing alongside with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in the struggle for civil rights, and remain committed to the values of self-determination, equality and fairness for all Australians.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

"The union movement supports, and will defend, the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to live on traditional lands and continue their cultural connection which is an invaluable part of Australia's identity as a nation.

"If the Abbott Government is serious about closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, why have they cut funding for services to Aboriginal communities?"

"Tony Abbott's insensitive "lifestyle choices" comment demonstrates his disconnection from the Aboriginal communities he purports to represent as the self-appointed Prime Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

"It is interesting to note that the Prime Minister's position reflects capitalisation and the sectional interests of corporate miners such as Reinhart and Forrest.

"Indigenous Australians must be consulted and involved in decision making rather than the paternalistic approach of the Abbott and Barnett Governments."

Media contact:

Natalie Pestana, 0439 986 224 or Kara Douglas, 0418 793 885

MARAMA,

You will need to raise a point of Order to get the Speakers attention. Best time to do this is after Business Statement and before the Oral Questions.

MARAMA FOX: Point of Order Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Marama Fox

MARAMA FOX: Mr Speaker. I seek leave to move without debate a motion in my name regarding the forced closure of Aboriginal communities in Australia.

Mr Speaker: Is there any objection to that course of action being followed?

(IF LEAVE IS GIVEN)

MARAMA FOX: *(member moves motion)*

I move that this House condemn the forced closure of Aboriginal communities in Australia, and call on the Australian Government to honour its commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through supporting the rights of Australia's indigenous peoples to live on their traditional land.

Mr Speaker: The Question is, That the motion be agreed to. Those of that opinion will say Aye, to the contrary, No. The Ayes have it.

Marama Fox: Point of Order Mr Speaker



Hon Te Ururoa Flavell & Marama Fox MP
Māori Party Co-leaders

māori
PARTY

Tēnā koe Hon Tony Abbott,

We write to you to voice our condemnation at the forced closure of Aboriginal communities in Australia as a result of your government's policies. We ask that your government honour its obligations to Australia's First Peoples.

As New Zealand's only indigenous political party formed in response to discriminatory actions of a previous government, the Māori Party shares the pain of Australia's First Peoples who face losing their connection to their ancestral land and the destruction of their communities as a result of government actions. The right of indigenous people to live on their traditional land and to live as a community is not a lifestyle choice, it is an integral part of our identity.

Recently Australia entered a new era in indigenous relations with the 2009 signing of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) receiving appropriate praises. Then-Minister Jenny Macklin hailed this as an effort to create a relationship built on "good faith, goodwill and mutual respect", although the Minister warned of returning to the flawed policies of the past.

The General Assembly of the United Nations recognised in the UNDRIP "the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources".

Article 8 of the UNDRIP declares "indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to force assimilation or destruction of their culture". It says the State should prevent and compensate indigenous peoples from "any form of forced population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights".

Mr Abbott, your government's actions constitute a return to the flawed policies of the past and will result in the loss of basic human rights such as access to clean water and the right to choose where to live. These actions violate Australia's obligations to the UNDRIP. The cutting of federal funding for municipal services in remote communities is your government disregarding its responsibility to Australia's First Peoples.

Pūrangi Motuhake 18041, Nga Whare Paremata,
Te Whanganui-ā-Tara 5160, Aotearoa
Waea 64 4 817 6824 **Waea Whakaahua** 64 4 817 6524
Imēra MaoriParty@parliament.govt.nz

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings,
Wellington 6160, New Zealand
Telephone 64 4 817 6824 **Facsimile** 64 4 817 6524
Email MaoriParty@parliament.govt.nz



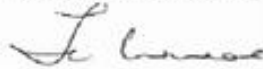
We ask you to reinstate federal funding for these remote aboriginal communities and commit to basic human rights and values.

We ask you to fulfil Australia's responsibilities to the First Peoples of Australia and honour your commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Nā māua noa, nā



Māori Party Co-leaders, Hon Te Ururoa Flavell & Marama Fox



Media contact for Marama Fox : Erena Richards 021 859 773



Gooniyandi Aboriginal Corporation

The Gooniyandi Aboriginal Corporation Directors and Cultural Advisors would like to have their say on the recent threats to close down remote communities in the Kimberley;

"We are saddened at the State and Federal Government's threats to close down remote communities across Australia. The Gooniyandi Native Title area covers nineteen Aboriginal communities many of which are remote and some that are listed as being at risk of defunding or closure. These political threats have caused real fear in those communities and has upset many especially the elders in these communities.

All Gooniyandi people wish to see their communities have real jobs and opportunities and the Corporation and member communities are working incredibly hard to see this happen. Gooniyandi Aboriginal Corporation has not been approached by any representatives from either the state or federal government on this matter since the threats emerged even though it effects us deeply

BACKGROUND



Background Information is as follows:

Origins:

- This action officially began in the late evening/early AM of Thursday 12th/Friday 13th March 2015 with the convergence of a group of 22 individuals on social media.
- It was initiated by Aboriginal people from the Kimberley region in Western Australia.
- It was the aligning of actions and frustrations in the community that had begun in 2014 triggered by the statement from Western Australian State Premier Colin Barnett 12 November 2014 where he announced that he would close up to 150 remote Aboriginal communities, saying the state could no longer afford to pay for essential services like power and electricity.
- The Premier's comments were in response to the Federal Government's decision to stop subsidising these services in the middle of 2015, putting the financial responsibility on individual state governments, a statement Tony Abbott had made at Garma in 2013, before they were voted into power.
- www.sosblakaaustralia.com was set up in November 2014 as a direct response from Colin Barnett's indication as a means to seek to be responsive and prepared for what was believed to be an obvious roll out of what the Government would assume to be a fait accompli. Its aim was and is to enable the community to be the solution and stand up to the whim of government in their constant undermining of Aboriginal people by launching a humanitarian effort for our people.
- 11 March 2015 Prime Minister Tony Abbott told ABC Radio, "What we can't do is endlessly subsidise lifestyle choices if those lifestyle choices are not conducive to the kind of full participation in Australian society that everyone should have."
- This statement was the pressure point for the communities to take a stand, which began in the Kimberley and has since grown to become a National and International movement. #SOSBLAKA AUSTRALIA is now an umbrella hashtag, social media presence and community response to bring efforts and community together.

1st Actions:

- The first call to action was planned for Thursday 19th March 2015, 6 days from the beginning of the campaign.
- On 15th March a media release was issued by the Kimberley Aboriginal Community which declared the call to action for the 19th March 2015 (4 days of planning and implementation) and issued a vote of no confidence in the State and Federal Government.
- Over 30 known local community actions occurred in every State and Territory across Australia while a combined 25,000 + marched.
- International actions were held in Manitoba Canada and London United Kingdom.
- A virtual protest was mounted and this gained global momentum with key celebrities such as Hugh Jackman, Angela Davis and Michael Franti amongst the thousands of people representing a diverse range of communities throughout Australia and the world.
- A petition was tabled to Federal Parliament on 20th March 2015 by the Greens party.
- Since 19th March 2015 – 14th April 2015 there have been 17 known local actions that have occurred across Australia and globally in support of SOSBLAKA AUSTRALIA to Stop the Forced Closure of Aboriginal Communities.
- The Australian Council of Trades Unions released a statement in support of Aboriginal Communities on Thursday 26 March 2015.

- 2nd April 2015 - The co-leader of the Maori Party in Aotearoa, Marama Fox attempted to put a motion before New Zealand Parliament condemning forced closure of Aboriginal communities in Australia.
- Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation in the Pilbara of WA is the first organization to shut down on 1st May in a show of support.
- On 10th April an estimated 13,000 people and 3,500 people marched in Melbourne and Sydney, bringing both cities to a standstill and are labelled Selfish Rabbles by the Herald Sun.
- 20 April 2015, an open letter is tabled by the Maori Party to Prime Minister Tony Abbott on his visit to Aotearoa.
- 22 April 2015, the Kimberley Land Council condemn the forced closures at the United Nations permanent forum of Indigenous Issues in New York.

Social Media update:

Facebook

- Our Facebook page is 55,405. This virtual community is larger in population than that of the 26th Largest city in Australia.
In 30 days, we became bigger in size than Wagga Wagga (pop 55,364).
- Our Facebook reach is over 1.8million. This virtual community is larger in population than that of the 5th Largest city in Australia.
In 30 days, we became bigger in reach than Adelaide, South Australia (pop. 1,304,631).

We have 44 Countries actively engaged worldwide, and 56 languages spoken on Facebook.
We are truly diverse.

These figures grow in the hundreds daily and are already outdated in the time it has taken to write this.

Twitter

- Bianca Jagger was the first international celebrity to post in support of #SOSBLAKA AUSTRALIA
- Will Anderson was the first Australia celebrity to post in support of #SOSBLAKA AUSTRALIA.
- Emma Donovan was the first Aboriginal celebrity to post in support of #SOS-BLAKA AUSTRALIA - a video on facebook. She has continued her support by leading a strong presence of the message at the 2015 Byron Bay Bluesfest and gathering artists in response.
- Tyson Mowarin and then Sam Cook took the helm of @IndigenousX guest spot for two weeks representing #SOSBLAKA AUSTRALIA.

On Saturday 11th April 2015, the Herald Sun's front page headline called the action of 10th April in Melbourne "Selfish Rabble Shut City".

@SOSBLAKAUST responded by initiating a twitter festival as an honouring of sorts for the Herald Sun.

At 11:45am they began #SelfishRabble. By 12:40pm it had trended at Number 1 on the Australian twitter feed and maintained this position for the duration of the "festival", beating AFL,

NRL, Julie Bishop and Coachella amongst others.

Instagram

Celebrity Response was initially through Instagram with Hugh Jackman responding to a message of a sign created by Blackfulla Revolution held by Children from Kennedy's Hill in Broome, Western Australia and photographed by Ingetjte Tadors. Other celebrities followed this action.



Dr. Cornel West
14 April at 14:52 · 🌐

We must stand united from around the globe. To my brothers and sisters in Australia, we can make change. STOP the forced closure of Aboriginal Communities. We must stand together to show our opposition to the threatened closure of remote Aboriginal communities by the Australian Government. I would love to meet you all when I'm in Australia this June. #sosblakaustalia -- MORE INFO: <http://thinkinc.org.au/cornelwest/>



An evening with Dr Cornel West

"You've got to be a thermostat rather than a thermometer. A thermostat shapes the climate of opinion; a thermometer just reflects it." This is the call for action from Dr. Cornel West – philosopher, academic, social theorist, educator, author, and poet...

THINKINC.ORG.AU

Unlike · Comment · Share

👍 You, Dr. Cornel West and 4,712 others like this.

Talib Kweli Greene @TalibKweli · 2h

RT @karlamac24: take a look at the #SOSBLAKAUSTRALIA hashtag and see what the gov is doing to Aboriginal People in Australia.

🔄 17 ⭐ 9 ⋮

SOS BLAK AUSTRALIA,
Your Tweet got retweeted!



SOS BLAK AUSTRALIA
@sosblakaust

Our official hashtags are #SOSBlakAustralia and #lifestylechoice

12:37 AM - 14 Mar 15



Retweeted by



Bianca Jagger @BiancaJagger
To 45600 followers.

Learn more about @BiancaJagger.

[View their profile](#)

A message from world renowned actor
Guy Pearce #SOSBLAKAUSTRALIA



Guy Pearce
@TheGuyPearce



[Follow](#)

"Lifestyle choices"? Wow, I'm humiliated by our supposed leader - an ignoramus. I'm so sorry to our Aboriginal brothers and sisters.

🔄 ⭐ ⋮

RETWEETS
32

FAVORITES
41



TysonMowarin @TMowarin 2h
@russellcrowe We fight for connection to country & our younger generations, u understand our ways? #sosblakaustralia



Russell Crowe @russellcrowe
@TMowarin yes, young fella . I understand. #sosblakaustralia . glad to see your guitar got fixed. Send my best wishes to all your mob.
22/03/2015 3:21 pm

1 RETWEET 7 FAVORITES

Reply to Russell Crowe



Kenny Hamilton @KennyHamilton

I'm just me.

Los Angeles • hwoodgroup.com

7,112 FOLLOWING 2,140,036 FOLLOWERS

Tweets Media Favorites



Kenny Hamilton @KennyHamilton 3h

Crazy what's going on in Australia in 2015... Stop the forced closure of Aboriginal communities.
#SOSBLAKAUSTRALIA #NoConsent

92 124

ZIMBABWE KID Musician/Band

70,628 likes

Post Photo/Video

Write something on this Page...

Darren Hayes retweeted
Thomishia Wareham @thomishia · 51m
@darrenhayes
Q: Do you support Aboriginal Australia.?



11 10 View more photos and videos

JESSICAMAUBOY1

4153 posts 216k followers 734 following

Following

jessica mauboy
Australian Singer/Songwriter Love being surrounded by Family, Friends & Music
www.jessicamauboy.com.au/

The Veronicas @TheVeronicas FOLLOWS YOU

THE VERONICAS MUSIC • OUR NEW ALBUM #TheVeronicas - OUT NOW • @JessicaVeronica • @Lisa_Veronica • Sea Shepherd activists • Wildlife Warriors • Rebel On

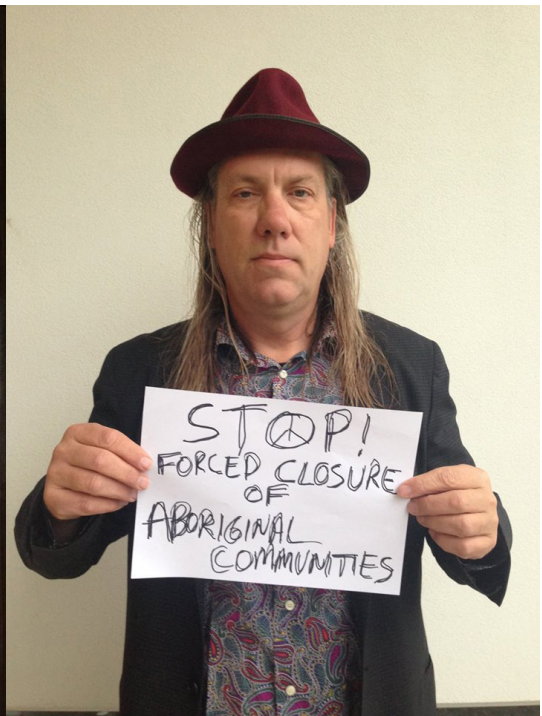
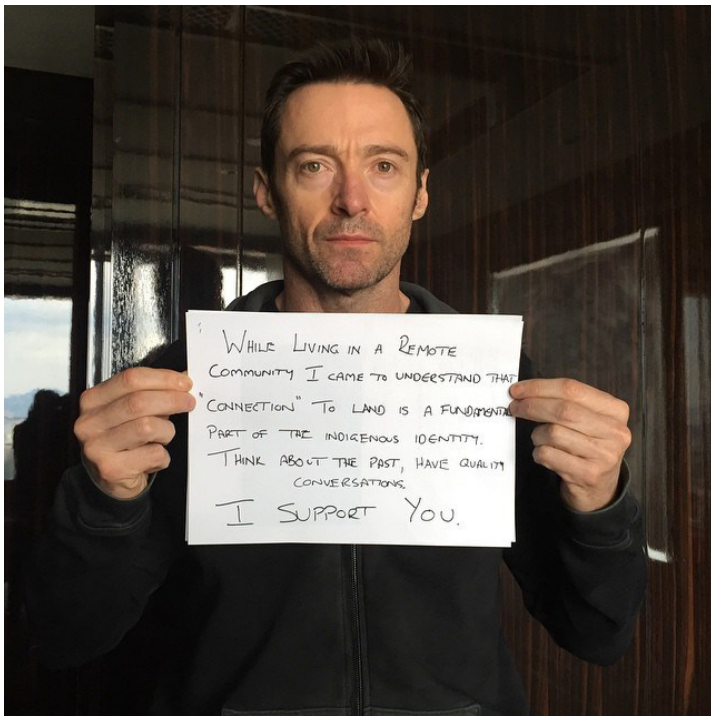
Mars • facebook.com/TheVeronicas

6,684 FOLLOWING 140,562 FOLLOWERS

Tweets Media Favorites

The Veronicas @TheVeronicas 4m
Just changed our profile picture in SUPPORT of our Aboriginal communities, & in protest against the forced closures happening in Australia X

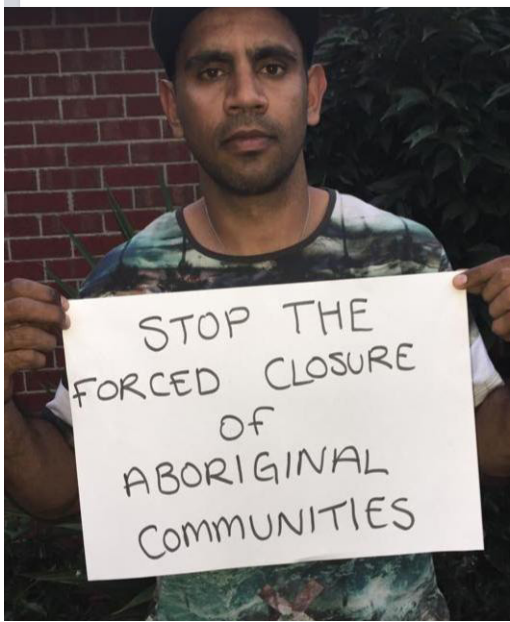
Timelines Notifications Messages Me



L-R: Hugh Jackman, Brian Ritchie (Violent Femmes), Natali Rize (Blue King Brown), Tiki Taane and Kane, Diesel n' Dub at Byron Bay Blues Fest, English Super League.



L-R: Angela Davis, Kutcha Edwards, Snuff Puppets, Michael Franti, Nahko Band, Black Arm Band.



L-R: Senator Milne, Ryan Coor, Nesian Mystik, Nick Sinckler, Nathan Lovett-Murray, The Mabo Family.



L-R: Bangarra, Bonnie Sveen, Last Kinection, Hawthorn Football Club, Shari Sebbens, Mama Kin

RECOMMENDED READING



Leaked document reveals 192 WA Aboriginal communities deemed unsustainable in 2010

By Andrew O'Connor

Wed 25 Mar 2015 ABC

Extensive research was conducted as early as 2010 to identify West Australian remote Aboriginal communities considered unsustainable, a leaked document held by the State Government shows.

The Government has resisted calls to accelerate consultation with Indigenous communities, arguing it has no framework in place for deciding which communities would close.

However, a document prepared by the Federal Government in 2010, titled "Priority Investment Communities - WA", categorised 192 of 287 remote settlements as unsustainable.

The document was circulated to the WA Department of Aboriginal Affairs in 2011.

The majority of those assessed as unsustainable are in the Kimberley, with 160 in the region, including Koorabye, Djugerari, Kadjina, Wurrenranginy, and Molly Springs.

The document names 14 unsustainable communities in the Pilbara, 11 in the Goldfields, four in the Midwest and three in the Wheatbelt.

The WA Government's plan to shut up to 150 of the state's remote communities has attracted widespread criticism, including fears it will lead to dispossession and homelessness, but also the backing of Prime Minister Tony Abbott.

WA Premier Colin Barnett made the announcement last year, after it was revealed the Federal Government was cutting off funding for key infrastructure in the townships.

150324 Priority Investment Communities WA LIST

Kimberley Land Council submission extracts
United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fourteenth Session – New York
20 April – 01 May 2015

Human Rights: Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (with specific focus on economic, social and cultural rights)

In Australia, failure to fully implement the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People by Government has proven to be a significant impediment to the pursuit of self-determination and strengthening of the economic, social and cultural rights of Indigenous people.

Australia is a federated nation with responsibility for implementation of the Declaration resting both with the National Government and in part with states within the federation. At present, Indigenous people in the state of Western Australia are witnessing a discriminatory and race-based erosion of their rights and the attempted assimilation of Indigenous people into white Australia, presenting a significant risk to our economic, social and cultural wellbeing through:

- the forced closure of Indigenous communities, attempting once again to separate people from their land and culture;
- laws that erode avenues for Indigenous people to protect their cultural heritage; and
- discriminatory land tenure administration, including the systematic interference with attempts by Indigenous people to pursue culturally appropriate and sustainable economic development opportunities.

The Australian Government has taken no steps to protect Indigenous people in response to these measures.

Forced closure of Indigenous communities

In November 2014, the Premier of the State of Western Australia declared an intention to close up to 150 of the 274 remote Indigenous communities in the state. This announcement was made without consultation with Indigenous people. It was made without regard to our wishes or our wellbeing. Not more than 100 years ago, our people were being forced off our land and put in missions and reserves. Not less than 40 years ago our children were being forcibly removed from their families and forced into institutional care. Less than 20 years ago the Australian Government enacted laws dealing with our native title rights which were, and still are today, racially discriminatory and a breach Australia's international human rights obligations.¹ As recently as 2007, the Australian government again suspended the Racial Discrimination Act in order to implement the Northern Territory Emergency Response.

History shows us that these policies have resulted in the gradual disintegration of cultural standards and governance; it has resulted in fringe communities in urban areas, in alcoholism and youth suicides, and in disempowerment. And now the Australian Government is allowing it to happen again. This program of forced closure and removal from country will be done by the removal by Government of essential services and is being applied:

- with complete discrimination – the Government is only proposing to remove services to Indigenous communities, without regard to remote non-Indigenous communities;

- without a long-term vision or alternative - no one has discussed what options or opportunities may be available to improve the economic sustainability of these communities; and
- with complete disregard to the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of the Indigenous people residing within them.

The protests of the Indigenous community against this situation have been met by the Australian Government with a dismissal that our living in these communities is a lifestyle choice.

But we do not believe that this is correct. Article 8 of the Declaration tells us that we have a right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of our culture. Articles 10, 26, 27 and 32 further affirm our rights in relation to our land. And Article 19 provides that we must first consent to these actions.

We would hope that no State, that purports to endorse the Declaration, can maintain that the rights embodied within that Declaration are a lifestyle choice.

Erosion of legal mechanisms to protect cultural heritage

The Aboriginal Heritage Act of Western Australia establishes legal and administrative mechanisms to control Indigenous cultural heritage in the interests of the community at large, but not in the interests of Indigenous people. And is primarily directed at processes to allow lawful damage to or destruction of our heritage places and objects.

This law is in the process of being amended to further narrow opportunities for Indigenous people to participate in the management, control or protection of their cultural heritage, and to provide even greater legal control over our heritage to government.

The Aboriginal Heritage Act, in both its current state and proposed amended form, is contrary to international human rights norms and is an example of systemic racism legitimatised and institutionalised by legislative means.

These laws entrench principles of colonial superiority and provide legal protection for systemic racism.

These laws therefore amount to a forced taking of our heritage so that it can be destroyed, damaged or compromised by the state in accordance with its own laws for the benefit of mining companies and other developers.

Discriminatory land tenure administration

Indigenous people are committed and active in looking for every opportunity to improve the wellbeing of our people.

The forced closure of Indigenous communities and the laws relating to Aboriginal heritage are but two pieces of a broader approach by the West Australian Government to interfere in Indigenous self-determination in the state. A third measure being applied is the discriminatory administration of land tenure and land management by the State Government to undermine actions taken by Indigenous people to improve their wellbeing and become economically self-sufficient.

Indigenous communities in the Kimberley have been active in pursuing opportunities to establish projects that use their native title rights to develop priorities for development and use of their lands. These projects align with our strong interest in protecting and taking care of the country we live on and include land management activities and carbon projects.

All Member States have an obligation to facilitate the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of Indigenous people. And this obligation extends to all levels of Government.

The Kimberley Land Council looks to the Permanent Forum, to fellow delegates and observers to sup-

port us in our call for Australia to comply with its obligations under the Declaration, and support the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of Australian Indigenous people.

(Endnotes)

1 In March 1999, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination found that in relation to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination the Australian Government's amendments to the *Native Title Act* breached Australia's international human rights obligations. UN Doc CERD/C/54/Misc.40/Rev.2, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *Decision (2)54 on Australia – Concluding observations/comments*, 18 March 1999.

Evicting Indigenous Australians from their homelands is a declaration of war

John Pilger

Australia occasionally interrupts its 'normal' mistreatment of Aboriginal people to deliver a frontal assault, like the closure of Western Australia's homelands

Wednesday 22 April 2015 13.56 AEST

Australia has again declared war on its Indigenous people, reminiscent of the brutality that brought universal condemnation on apartheid South Africa. Aboriginal people are to be driven from homelands where their communities have lived for thousands of years. In Western Australia, where mining companies make billion dollar profits exploiting Aboriginal land, the state government says it can no longer afford to "support" the homelands.

Vulnerable populations, already denied the basic services most Australians take for granted, are on notice of dispossession without consultation, and eviction at gunpoint. Aboriginal leaders have warned of "a new generation of displaced people" and "cultural genocide".

The prime minister, Tony Abbott, has revived this assault on a people who represent Australia's singular uniqueness. Soon after coming to office, the federal government cut \$534m in Indigenous social programs, including \$160m from the Indigenous health budget and \$13.4m from Indigenous legal aid.

In the 2014 report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators*, the devastation is clear. The number of Aboriginal people hospitalised for self-harm has leapt, as have suicides among those as young as 11. The indicators show a people impoverished, traumatised and abandoned. Read the classic work of apartheid South Africa, *The Discarded People* by Cosmas Desmond, who told me he could write a similar account of Australia.

In announcing that the Australian government would no longer honour the longstanding commitment to Aboriginal homelands, Abbott sneered, "It's not the job of the taxpayers to subsidise lifestyle choices." The weapon used by Abbott and his redneck state and territorial counterparts is dispossession by propaganda, coercion and blackmail. The minister for Indigenous affairs, Nigel Scullion, has been accused of threatening to stop providing basic services unless Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory sign 99-year leases. According to Scullion, "this is about what communities want". In fact, there has been no real consultation - only the time-honoured co-option of a few.

Both Coalition and Labor governments have already withdrawn the national jobs

program and the community development employment projects from the homelands, ending opportunities for employment, and prohibited investment in infrastructure: housing, generators, sanitation. The saving is peanuts.

The reason is an extreme doctrine that evokes the punitive campaigns of the early 20th century “chief protector of Aborigines”, such as the fanatic AO Neville who decreed that the first Australians “assimilate” to extinction. Influenced by the same eugenics movement that inspired the Nazis, Queensland’s “protection acts” were a model for South African apartheid. Today, the same dogma and racism are threaded through anthropology, politics, the bureaucracy and the media. “We are civilised, they are not,” wrote the acclaimed Australian historian Russel Ward two generations ago. The spirit is unchanged.

Having reported on Aboriginal communities since the 1960s, I have watched a seasonal routine whereby the Australian elite interrupts its “normal” mistreatment and neglect of the people of the First Nations, and attacks them outright. This happens when an election approaches, or a prime minister’s ratings are low. Kicking the blackfella is deemed popular, although grabbing minerals-rich land by stealth serves a more prosaic purpose; and driving people into the fringe slums of “economic hub towns” satisfies the social engineering urges of racists.

The last frontal attack was the 2007 Northern Territory Intervention, when John Howard sent the army into Aboriginal communities to “rescue children” who, claimed his minister for Aboriginal affairs, Mal Brough, were being abused by paedophile gangs in “unthinkable numbers”.

It was a shameful episode in which the media played a vital role. In 2006, the national TV current affairs program, the ABC’s Lateline, broadcast a sensational interview with a man whose face was concealed. Described as a “youth worker” who had lived in the Aboriginal community of Mutitjulu, he made a series of lurid, unsubstantiated allegations. Subsequently exposed as a senior government official who reported directly to the minister, his claims were discredited by the Australian Crime Commission, the Northern Territory police and a damning report by child medical specialists. The community received no apology.

The intervention allowed the federal government to destroy many of the vestiges of self-determination in the Northern Territory, the only part of Australia where Aboriginal people had won federally-legislated land rights. Here, they had administered their homelands in ways that allowed the dignity of self-determination and connection to land and culture and, as Amnesty International reported, a 40% lower mortality rate.

It is this “traditional life” that is anathema to a parasitic white industry of civil servants, contractors, lawyers and consultants that controls and often profits from Aboriginal Australia, if indirectly through the “free market” corporate structures imposed on Indigenous organisations. The homelands are seen as a threat to white power, for even in poverty they express a communalism at odds with the neo-conservatism that rules Australia.

The current political attack was launched in the richest state, Western Australia. Last October, the state premier, Colin Barnett, announced that his state could not afford

\$90m for basic municipal services to 282 homelands: water, power, sanitation, schools, road maintenance, rubbish collection. It was the equivalent of informing the white suburbs of Perth that their lawn sprinklers would no longer sprinkle and their toilets no longer flush; and they had to move; and if they refused, the police would evict them.

Where would the dispossessed go? Where would they live? In six years, Barnett's government has built few houses for Indigenous people in remote areas. In the Kimberley region, Indigenous homelessness - aside from natural disaster and civil strife - is one of the highest in the world, in a state renowned for its conspicuous wealth, golf courses and prisons overflowing with impoverished black people. Western Australia jails Aboriginal males at more than eight times the rate of apartheid South Africa. It has one of the highest incarceration rates of juveniles in the world, almost all of them Indigenous. In 2013, the former prisons minister, Margaret Quirk, told me that the state was "racking and stacking" Aboriginal prisoners. When I asked what she meant, she said, "It's warehousing."

In March, Barnett changed his story. There was "emerging evidence", he said, "of appalling mistreatment of little kids" in the homelands. What evidence? Barnett claimed that gonorrhoea had been found in children younger than 14, then conceded he did not know if these were in the homelands. His police commissioner, Karl O'Callaghan, chimed in that child sexual abuse was "rife". He quoted a 15-year-old study by the Australian Institute of Family Studies. What he failed to say was that the report highlighted "neglect" - in other words, poverty - as the most prevalent type of maltreatment. Sexual abuse accounted for less than 10%.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, a federal agency, recently released a report on the "fatal burden" of third world disease and trauma borne by Indigenous people "resulting in almost 100,000 years of life lost due to premature death". This "fatal burden" is the product of extreme poverty imposed in Western Australia, as in the rest of Australia, by the denial of human rights.

In Barnett's vast rich Western Australia, barely a fraction of mining, oil and gas revenue has benefited communities for which his government has a duty of care. In the town of Roeburne, in the midst of the booming minerals-rich Pilbara, 80% of the Indigenous children suffer from an ear infection called otitis media that causes deafness.

In 2011, Barnett's government displayed a brutality in the community of Oombulgurri which the other homelands can expect. "First, the government closed the services," wrote Tammy Solonec of Amnesty International:

It closed the shop, so people could not buy food and essentials. It closed the clinic, so the sick and the elderly had to move, and the school, so families with children had to leave, or face having their children taken away from them. The police station was the last service to close, then eventually the electricity and water were turned off. Finally, the 10 residents who resolutely stayed to the end were forcibly evicted [leaving behind] personal possessions. [Then] the bulldozers rolled into Oombulgurri. The WA government has literally dug a hole and in it buried the rubble of people's homes and personal belongings.

In South Australia, the state and federal governments launched a similar attack on the 60 remote Indigenous communities. South Australia has a long-established Aboriginal