



ALP backs 'tough love' approach

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LABOR has embraced a radical plan by Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson to overhaul welfare and housing in communities as part of an effort to avoid being outflanked by the Coalition on indigenous affairs in the lead-up to the election.

After meeting Mr Pearson for discussions in Cairns, Kevin Rudd said last night Labor would implement the 'tough love' reforms across four Cape York communities if he became prime minister.

Under the plans, indigenous families could lose welfare payments if their children failed to attend school, or if the parents broke strict rules on alcohol or drugs.

Payments could be stopped if public housing was abused or rent not paid, or if family violence offences were committed.

Mr Pearson outlined the proposed changes in a landmark report, titled *From Hand Out to Hand Up*, released in Canberra last week.

Preliminary estimates put the cost of the Cape York reforms at \$15million a year, covering about 3000 people across the Cape.