CFMEU CONSTRUCTION AND GENERAL

UNIONS NT

To the Honourable President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled:

We the undersigned are citizens concerned with the exploitation of Aboriginal workers taking place under the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), which was reformed by the Labor government in 2009.

Aboriginal workers in the Northern Territory are working at least 16 hours a week under the scheme, but only being paid their Newstart allowance through Centrelink. In many cases, workers are subject to Income Management and have 50 per cent of these payments 'quarantined' onto a BasicsCard.

We are particularly concerned by the use of CDEP labour on the federal government's $672 million Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP). Local Aboriginal workers on CDEP have been working for substandard CDEP wages, or for the BasicsCard, alongside fully paid construction workers from outside the community.

This is a grave affront to the principle of equal pay for equal work.

Your petitioners request that the Senate take action to ensure:

i) The use of CDEP labour on SIHIP sites ceases immediately and all CDEP workers involved in SIHIP are offered fully waged jobs.

ii) A full investigation takes place into the use of CDEP labour as part of SIHIP.

iii) CDEP workers engaged by SIHIP to date are back paid for all work done at the appropriate award rate.

iv) CDEP arrangements that put people to work for Centrelink entitlements are abolished and replaced by a large-scale community based employment program that remunerates Aboriginal workers at appropriate award rates.

Please return to CFMEU Darwin, PO Box 3046, Darwin NT 0801 by March 10 2011

Print Name	Address	Signature