



NT Consultations Report 2011

By Quotations

Warning: This book may contain photos of people who have passed into the Spirit world.

First Published in 2012 by ‘concerned Australians’

PO Box 281
East Melbourne VIC 8002

NT Consultations Report 2011: By Quotations

Editor: Michele Harris

ISBN: 978-0-646-57214-7

Title 1 of 1 - NT Consultation Report 2011: By Quotations

Format: Hardback

Publication Date: 02/2012

[1] Aboriginal Studies

[2] Anthropology

[3] Law

Acknowledgements:

Bagot Community, Alice Springs Town Camps, Galiwin’ku Community, Kintore Community, Maningrida Community, Mutitjulu Community, Yirrkala Community, Yuendumu Community, attendees of the Darwin and Alice Springs Public Meetings, Hilary Tyler, Kendall Trudgen, Emma Murphy, Dean Whittaker, Amala Groom, Charlotte McCabe, Marlene Hodder, Wendy Salter, Rosa McKenna, Joe Annetts, Pia Pagotto, Nicola Coles, Craig Stevens, Peter Gude, and the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart

Photography: Becka Mezzatesta, newbornproductions.tv
Sinem Saban, Hilary Tiler and Pia Pagotto

Art Work: Chris Adam, Veronica Gartland

Editing and Layout: Sabine Kacha

Printing and Support: Vega Press, Notting Hill, Victoria

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Introduction

Between June and August 2011, the Government conducted Stronger Futures consultations across the Northern Territory.

The most significant of the consultations were those held in what the Government has described as ‘prescribed communities’. This is because the 2007 Northern Territory Emergency Response, or the Intervention as it is better known, was directed at Aboriginal peoples living in these seventy-three areas.

Consultations from different parts of the Territory were recorded. These were from the communities of Kintore, Yuendumu, Mutitjulu, Alice Springs Town Camps, Galiwin’ku, Maningrida, Yirrkala and from Bagot Community. Additionally, two public meeting ‘consultations’ were also recorded – one in Darwin and the other in Alice Springs.

The consultations had a stated focus of finding out from Aboriginal peoples what needed to be done to improve their lives in the Northern Territory. In other words, what was working and what wasn’t. With current NTER legislation due to come to an end in August 2012, what would community members like to see happening after that date?

Other changes, in addition to the Intervention, imposed on Territory communities were also discussed during the consultations including the establishment of Shires

in 2008. This change effectively transferred the control of communities to administrative centres, in some cases, as far away as a thousand kilometres. Shire offices employ many non-Aboriginal staff and regularly employ contractors from outside to undertake work within communities. These changes have been far from popular.

The single most repeated message from the consultations is the demand for community control to be returned to the people and for the right to self-determination to be re-established. This strong message is not referred to in the Government's Consultation Report.

What may seem remarkable is the regularity of the message. It would be surprising if the other sixty-odd community consultations were not calling for similar changes.

The desire for the return of the bilingual learning programme to Northern Territory schools was also repeatedly called for. Once again we find that this hardly gets a mention in the Government Report.

Government tells us that, *during the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory consultations, housing discussions considered home ownership, including how to encourage greater private home ownership*¹. It is based on such discussions that Government is proposing to change arrangements for long-term leasing of Aboriginal land. Surprisingly, in these ten consultations there appears to be no particular focus of any kind on home ownership.

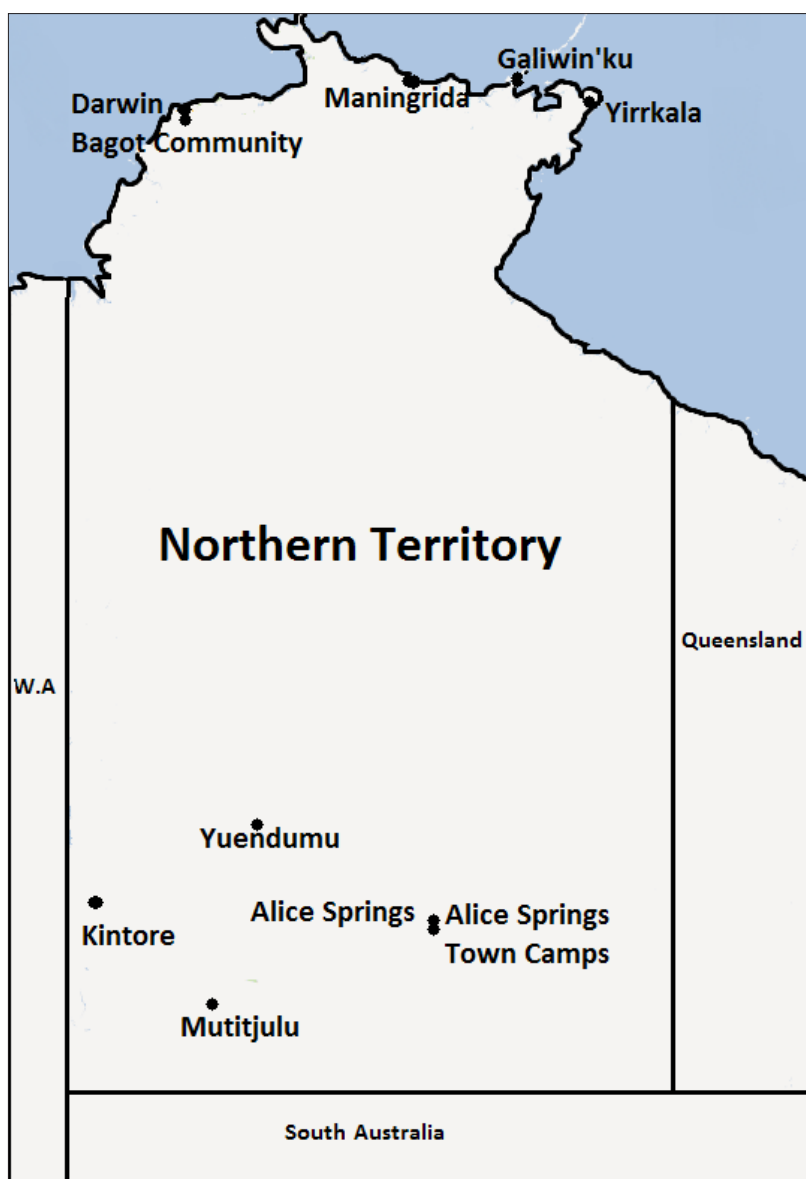
This book is one of quotations and it should be remembered that many Aboriginal peoples are communicating in a second, third or fourth language. This also reminds us of why the use of interpreters is so important. CIRCA, the Government consultant, reports having attended twelve consultations and that, *while interpreters were available at ten consultations, they were only used extensively in three of these.*²

Anyone wishing to read the full transcripts can find them on the ‘concerned Australians’ website www.concernedaustralians.com.au.

‘concerned Australians’, January 2012

¹ The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. House of Representatives. 2010-2011. *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011. Explanatory Memorandum*. Page 25 <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2011B00242/55aa4872-d04b-4809-b032-f4438ad54e00>

² Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia (CIRCA). 2011. *Report on Stronger Futures Consultation 2011. Final Report*. Page 21 http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/pubs/nter_reports/Documents/circa_qa.pdf



How Did We Feel About the Consultations?

... it's good for you to sit there and listen to us, but I want to know really truly are you hearing what we're saying? It's okay for you to have this consultation, but at the end of the day, is there going to be any changes? Because, I've been over-consulted, I've been poked, I've been probed, I've met *[inaudible]* I've had ministers in my house for coffee, I've been making scones, you know, I've tried to do all those *[inaudible]*, and the message is not really getting through. So I see this as another way for the government to come in and tell us how to live our lives and how to do what we're going to do whether we like it or not.

Alice Springs Town Camps Consultation

Are we going to be heard? ... My point at the beginning, when you guys started with the Intervention, the same things that we heard: "You are going to be heard!" That never, never, never happened! It just went in here *[pointing to right ear]* here *[pointing to left ear]* and blew it out, the wind blew it out.

Yuendumu Consultation



Maningrida Consultation Participant

We told them what we want. They're here pretending they're listening. "That's a good question! ... a big question mark." Are they committed to us mob? What do they do it to us for? They know what we want. They need to work with us. That gap you keep talking about. You keep making it bigger rather than smaller. We trying to work with you mob. I mean you know what we want. We don't want to still be in behind the eight ball. We want to move forward. We keep hitting the brick wall.

Maningrida Consultation

... you come up with a better idea this time, "we think it'll work!" But how many times, how many years has the government done it and it hasn't worked? When is there going to be a time where you can say, "Okay we'll give you a go." Why don't they give us ... a go at things now and see if it works?

Alice Springs Town Camps Consultation

... and we been slaves for so long here, we been hang our neck and we been drag, dragging the chain of stone for so long. So when the government gonna listen to us? ... And most of us are really sick and tired now, we are really sick and tired of this nonsense going on. The government are trying to talk to the community this and this and this, and you have to do this and this, you know? We are made by God, we got eyes, brain, ears! We hear. We can do it ourselves.

Galiwin'ku Consultation



Maningrida Consultation Participant

Government promises I'll be talking about. How many times have we visits from you mob, the government people? Promises of a better future? How many times have you heard that? Changes to the Intervention. The Intervention taking another form, another face? What business have we achieved from the Intervention? Five areas of action: health, housing, schools, community safety and protection of children? What about roads and street lights, issues we talk about between government and community. Same story from not just our community, but from other communities as well. You say, I hear you, I am listening to you. The question is how well are you listening? *[clapping]*

Maningrida Consultation

... we are tired of all talk and no action. We want Jenny Macklin to come to us. We are sick of not seeing politicians in our communities face to face.

Kintore Consultation

There is nothing yet. You've seen it. You knew it. You know every month, and month and month listen to them, the next government officials come. I mean there is nothing. The promises and nothing happen! We need to see the promises come in *[with emphasis]*. Act on the promises!

Maningrida Consultation



Mutitjulu Consultation Participant

It's been a total failure, the Intervention. Rather than closing the gap, the government's own statistics show the Indigenous imprisonment rates have increased by 35% - putting more people in jail. That's number 1 statistic. A lot of other communities in the Northern Territory the attendance rates at schools has dropped. And in many places suicide and self-harm has increased because of the Intervention. And there's a growing crisis in urban areas like Alice Springs. People from out, from other communities going into Alice Springs. It must've worked by oppressing people.

Mutitjulu Consultation

... because how are Indigenous people going to trust the government when they've had so many services come in and impact on their rights, whether it's been good or bad. It hasn't been a process where people were consulted. So where do you see that people are empowered enough to go on in the future?

Alice Springs Town Camps Consultation

But don't walk away with the information and then you go back into your office and then you interpret what you want to interpret. You've got to understand what the people are really saying. What does it mean? Look through their eyes, understand. Walk in their shoes to really understand what they say.

Darwin Public Meeting



Bagot Community Consultation Participant

We're only people here, we're wasting our voice. Talking, to bring about everything. We don't get any report from that end [Shire]. Nothing. Ever since I was talking, talking, talking - anything coming to get issues from Maningrida? No report from them.

Maningrida Consultation

Come down from your bloody throne! And sit down and talk with us! Come down from your cloud number nine and sit down with us. And, you know, in here *[picking up pamphlet from the ground where he'd thrown it and waving it]* there's nothing about culture, nothing about Law, no land, nothing! In here, there's no Law, no Law, no Law, no language and respect of the Indigenous people! ... Hear our lips: NO! This is not a proper consultation *[language]*. This consultation is *[language 'lowa'?)* nothing.

Yuendumu Consultation

Different year same thing ... And the people that do make the changes, they don't live in the community, they live over there in the big town over there, Canberra. They don't know what it's like to live in community and yet they've got the cheek to change it.

Bagot Community Consultation



Maningrida Consultation Participant

Once it's all been fed in and the policy makers come up with their proposals, is that proposal going to be brought back for a second round of consultations, so the people can say "yes, you heard us. That's what we want or no, you made a mistake before it goes into law." 'Cos what's happened in the past is these consultations have happened, then something's become law and everybody's said that they didn't listen to us. So are you going to come back and let those people whose lives it's going to affect say it's OK before it becomes law?

Darwin Public Meeting

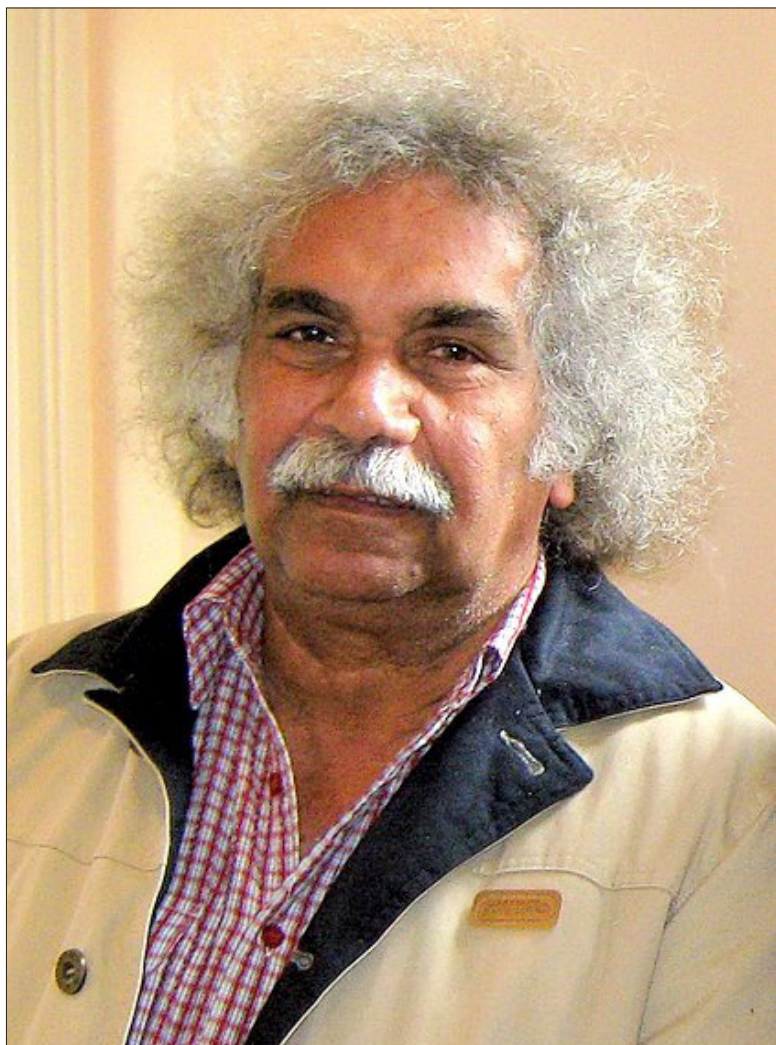
Therefore if you seriously want to come and talk to the people of Maningrida about this, it's got to be with mutual respect. So come back at any time, stay for two or three days, that way we can properly reconcile ... This means to us, it's nothing. It's just written up by the government. It's not coming from community perspective, it's not the community voice. So for us that is sad day business ... so in future, if there is another consultation happening, please, my advice is, give us 6 weeks, at least, notice because we come from all over the place ... *[clapping]*

Maningrida Consultation

Facilitator: I'd first like to ask everyone how much interpreting do you want? Do you want me to do it slowly with interpreting or are you happy I speak in English, for short time, you know? ...

Community: A bit of both!

Yuendumu Consultation



Darwin Public Meeting Participant

Give Us Back Control Over Our Communities

The Intervention has been about the transference of Aboriginal control of assets and decision-making powers in the community to government administrative bodies. That has happened with the abolition of community councils in the local communities, to the ... Shires which people have a lot of grievances about in communities which aren't being heard.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

What you've done is take away empowerment ... Give us the right to run our own communities, give us the money, don't go to the second party up here in the (NT). You've taken everything else, the tribe that take take. We've got hardly anything to give anymore.

Darwin Public Meeting

All it is, you mob just drip-system feeding us through these service providers and this is what the government done here. Government took all the services off the council and gave it to service providers. I'll bet you any money it's costing you more dollars than you ever thought about it. ... At the moment you mob are putting all your fundings in the wrong basket.

Mutitjulu Consultation



Yuendumu Consultation Participant

I got, I got some things written down here. I want to read them out, hey? Everything you must restore community governments. You must put everything back into Mutitjulu Aboriginal Corporation – number 1. We got the rights to make our own decisions – we have rights to self-determination. Governance has got to be put back into Mutitjulu Community – Mutitjulu Aboriginal Corporation, because we still have our own council here.

Mutitjulu Consultation

Hand it back to the community, the leadership. They need to take control of their affairs. It's their business let 'em take control. The NT Government put the shires in place to take control overall. I think that's completely disempowered the leaders in those remote communities.

Darwin Public Meeting

We can't just let outsiders do business for us. We need to do it ourselves. Think about it. We can't just keep on putting it writing it down on a board and other people come and take notes of what we said. We need to do it ourselves. *[language]* We got brains. We got things to (aim) for like funding *[language]*. We can't have someone always working for us!

Yuendumu Consultation



Galiwin'ku Consultation Participants

... until governments do recognise the local governance structures and allow those (structures) the Elders and the land owners to control things, then things aren't going to get better and I think one answer is recognising sovereignty. As people have said, the people of North East Arnhem Land and I guess everywhere else, still believe and know this is their country and it's never been ceded to the Commonwealth and a treaty is ... essential to moving forward.

Darwin Public Meeting

... we want to lay a strong foundation for our kids, but how can we do that? How can we come and sit down and talk and make things reality? We want to see new vision, new goals for this community.

Galiwin'ku Consultation

... we can form our own economic base if the government allows us to implement our own plans. We are getting our own economic development survey done at the moment. We're looking at all the enterprises that we have. Through our businesses we have cheaper food in our stores here than anywhere else. If the government wants to look at developing the Aboriginal communities, look at Mutitjulu Aboriginal Corporation and CAP. They're doing a good job.

Mutitjulu Consultation



Yirrkala Consultation Participant

Blanket income management needs to go. The government needs to consult with community more. People are different, communities are different. The 'one size fits all' approach that the government likes to impose on communities does a lot of harm.

Darwin Public Meeting

... we really want our community store to be recognized again, to be up and running ... Because when the old shop was running it used to make a profit and the profit used to come back to the store, come back to the community. That's why we really need our big store to be reopened again and operated again.

Yuendumu Consultation

... bring representative of each of these clan groups to make a good governance for ... Make it strong voice ... form Laynhapuy representatives, Ngapaki and Yolngu working together. Eh? Eh? Dhanbul, Laynha work together. Re-establish a new governance, ok?

Yirrkala Consultation

We did our banking here, and it was run by the Commonwealth Bank and we had a couple of Yapa working there. They did a proper bank job. Things like that, good for the community, you know? People don't have to go to town to do their banking. ... Can you write that down please? We can try and ask, we can try and apply to have the Commonwealth Bank re-opened...

Yuendumu Consultation



Aboriginal Elders –

*Rosalie Kunoth-Monks, Rev. Dr. Djiniyini Gondarra,
Harry Jakamarra Nelson, George Gaymarani Pascoe*

... you need meet with the Elders, the law people and that's what they been asking for. Not the middle man, but talk to the people who are out there. We come up with all the solutions and ideas, however, it's the people who are affected out there on the ground. They're the ones that should be sitting round the table as parties talking about solutions ... and how to move forward ... but bring them together, the law people ... Talk to people like Djiniyini Gondarra, Rosalie Kunoth-Monks, George Pascoe, who's the other one, I can't think ... Harry Nelson. Bring them together.

Darwin Public Meeting

... Indigenous cultures are unique, languages are unique, people are unique, communities are unique, families are unique and unless the consultation process means an ongoing conversation with individuals, community groups, families as well as the community as a whole, umm, I think it runs the risk of being wasted all over again ...

Alice Springs Public Meeting

... the government's answer to the problems within the Northern Territory was the 20 growth towns. The communities are going to be wiped out. So I'd like to ask, where is the consultation, where is the respect for those people and for their way of life even just to live in their own backyard and not have to worry about anything else? You're bringing in mainstream everything, everywhere.

Darwin Public Meeting



Kintore Consultation Participant

... in Indigenous communities ... these people, because of the social expectation and the social engineering that is happening around the Northern Territory, their self-esteem and their hope is just so far gone that they can't even see the future.

Darwin Public Meeting

It's all about working together ... because Aboriginal people have their own solutions to their own problems and today it's not working, because it's coming from the top down and the only way to work with us is to actually down out here and we move up and move forward that way.

Alice Springs Town Camps Consultation

When you don't know the system ... it's very difficult to answer all these questions and to be able to stand up proud and get a job [*crying*], because you don't understand the question. Physically, you're capable of doing the job, but according to the government paper, because you don't make the pass mark, you don't get the job. And how do you feel about their dignity?

Darwin Public Meeting

A really strong message ... They need to start looking at it from a human point of view, from a moral point of view. What is morally correct for the government to do? ... Because the government has done so much hurt and so much pain to the Indigenous peoples of this land Australia that they need to start helping and putting things in which grow our ... spirit back which is a healthy way of living for us. So they need to look at it not from an economically viable point of view, but whether it is morally or humanitarially a good thing.

Kintore Consultation



Maningrida Consultation Participant

We Want Support for Our Homelands

We want to stay in our homeland - that is where we can create and development, that's where we can create our community, that's where we can create our businesses.

Maningrida Consultation

They're not going to fund homelands any more. We demand that they fund homelands.

Mutitjulu Consultation

... we support homeland. They are our people living out there. They need services running out there for them, education, clinic and food services all those things. Accommodation we need that. They're part of us, this community, we are one, one, no matter how crowded, we're so many tribes living here today. 3,000 people, a lot of people, a lot of homeland people come here in the wet season to be with their families here. I want you to understand there are health issues to fix up. Now we have to stand up, us. We have to stand up ourselves.

Maningrida Consultation



Maningrida Consultation Participant

... we aren't able to service the homelands all year round and yet you can't assist us in any way or form, which is bullshit, I reckon. This government has failed us from day one in terms of supporting our people on the ground. And how can you support us right now in negotiating this ...?

Maningrida Consultation

All we talkin' about is our survival. How do we survive on living out there now when a lot of our services have been cut and even our resource centres when we had CDEP workers out there? So we don't have the service. So we have to rely to come into town into Alice.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

The homelands and the community. Ga, we are feeling like everybody. Government is rounding us up like a cattle into one yard. Bimbi ga cattle, sheep, pig from different backgrounds in one yard. Centralising all the people ga, some of us living there we think that we're having a picnic there. Camping there just having fun. Without knowing that [in the homelands] we are taking care of the environment. And centralising us here is a pollution. Poison. But there we looking after the land. We are part of the land. The sea. And that's why we are located there away from this influence.

Galiwin'ku Consultation



Maningrida Consultation Participant

People saying support the homelands. We want to live in the homelands. But so the government should be saying “so well, how can we do that, how can we support you to do that?” And one thing is maintaining roads. Maintaining roads, so that they can get to their homelands, get backwards and forwards from their homelands to their community.

Galiwin'ku Consultation

They need to fix more roads properly so that we can get to the people. Bridge, rivers to get across. Last year we got heavy rain. Couldn't go out to pick up our sick ones, you know. We had to wait, rain at night, you know is a bit dangerous to get there we run one of health truck at night and we maybe help ones during the day, but not at night. Need to look at supporting ... more money ... Look at supporting people in the bush...

Maningrida Consultation

... we have major concerns with outstations roads, not only outstation roads, but outstation jobs, outstation housing. You know the majority of people that are in this community are not really local, they are outstation peoples and their places are not being looked after. Employment, we've got 250 people on CDEP. How are you going to create jobs that are not here? There is just nothing here.

Maningrida Consultation



Bagot Community Consultation

It Is Important for All Our Children to Get a Good Education

But I've heard a lot of old people say that it's so important to them that their young people learn their traditional language. With them not speaking it at that young age and they're losing their language. And that's so important to their culture. And if you want to have the community support the education, you got to get those old people on side and that's what's important to them is their culture and their language.

Darwin Public Meeting

... one of the most alarming figures comes from formerly bilingual education schools like Lajamanu and Yuendumu who record over 20% drops in attendance rates since the Intervention began which leads one to conclude that the cutting of bilingual education programmes and cutting out of people's first language in schools has a massive impact in whether kids engage with those.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

The NT department has stolen away our bilingual school. We want our bilingual school back. *[clapping]*

Maningrida Consultation

They're taking all your rights away like we gone back to olden time again. They trying to say "oh, all you tjitji (children) got to go to school" but they take your language out of the school ... we been talking about bilingual education.

Mutitjulu Consultation



Maningrida Consultation Participant

And they got to lift the ban on bilingual education.
[language] kamiku, kamiku wangka for education,
bilingual education, bilingual education at school. It's got
to be put back into that school and the kindergarten and
the high school – bilingual education because we have a
Board of Management - Tjukurrpa on top.

Mutitjulu Consultation

... why did the government stop bilingual education?
What you're getting to work for the area, a child needs to
be bilingual. To learn to read both in yolngu matha and
balanda matha. [clapping]

Galiwin'ku Consultation

Yeah, Yeah. Governments should recognise and put
that bilingual programme back into the curriculum
documents.

Bagot Consultation

You have to recognise both ... Learn both Indigenous
and the Western. Put it together. If you want to learn our
culture, come, fit in, sit with us, learn our culture. That
is an important part of our life. Our law is strict for our
children to teach them, teach our children for the future
life.

Maningrida Consultation

I think the decision by the Northern Territory
government - the First Four Hours policy - which was
about cutting bilingual education and just having it for
the last hour of each day ... I think that was a real step in
the wrong direction.

Darwin Public Meeting



Maningrida Consultation Participant

You are looking at this education is Western side, but why not accepting our education model, our culture, our stories, our knowledge, our future for our future children to pass our knowledge as one? Why has that not been recognised?

Maningrida Consultation

So it's like when you have Cinderella and Snow White and all them sort of stories, we need our stories put into them books so our children can learn that as well. And we need that in the library.

Kintore Consultation

They need to start funding Aboriginal studies. They need to start putting in curriculum, which is relevant to us.

Kintore Consultation

... truly engaging people to be part of the decision-making. If they're part of the decision-making, and they make the decisions about their kids, then you're going to have more buy-in, a lot more buy-in.

Darwin Public Meeting

We been asking education, government to give us a teacher for school so all our kids can go to school to learn to read and write English. And that's what we been asking for a long time ...

Kintore Consultation

... we got only visiting teacher who comes only once a week and like maybe we need more funding for the school.

Maningrida Consultation



Maningrida Consultation Participant

To help us with our children we have to make an environment where our children wish to learn and when we are teaching our children we should be able to help shape the curriculum that is relevant to our children ... We need funding, we don't have music classes here. Many studies have shown that children learn better, become emotionally better, become socially better if they have music in their lives and so we need funding here at Kintore to have a music programme in our schools.

Kintore Consultation

I'm just looking at all those questions up there and they all look to me like they're questions about how we *make* things happen, rather than asking questions about how will children *want* to go to school and *why*, how would they enjoy being at school and *how* would they enjoy learning ... but there're issues of actually turning it around so we're encouraging learning as something people want to do and making it worthwhile for them rather than a set of ways of how can we make this happen.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

... our children who should be getting educated, who should be kicked up their arses and told to get to school and their parents to support them. If that does not happen we're diminished and I think we have to stop making excuses for our people.

Alice Springs Public Meeting



Maningrida Consultation Participant

When you are told that you're not allowed to learn in your own [language], you're not allowed to learn this, you're not allowed to learn that, you feel shame, people start to feel to shame. It happened in the missionary days. People started to feel shame inside themselves, [muffled] all around. Well, I don't want that shame being burnt into our kid's future ...

Kintore Consultation

I work with 12 night patrol teams who are trying to move away from the patrolling model of the past and they work with families and schools and they collect young people every morning and take them to school and give the families a bit of a hard time about the importance of getting them to school ... and that's about the community empowering the community and that's where it has to start.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

... I think that both those governments should have to regard proper provision of properly qualified psychologists and special needs teachers as non-negotiable ...

Alice Springs Public Meeting

... empowering the people by giving the curriculum to have some say by the Elders because they know best the way their people actually learn best and being able to connect mainstream culture to their traditional culture ...

Darwin Public Meeting



Kintore Consultation Participants

... when we have funerals on, the Australian government mainstream *[muffled]*. We are trying to follow both laws so we shouldn't get in trouble and have our money cut off when we take our children for sorry business for funeral. We shouldn't have our money cut off and marked as absent for our children ... Do you think that the government would be able to, when they write their education policy to put allowances in there for our cultural responsibilities that we follow?

Kintore Consultation

When you living 70 kms out of town and kids need to go to school, where's the transport? Because the mother and father got no transport then the mother and father gets blamed for not sending that child to school. ... There's no public transport.

Alice Springs Town Camps Consultation

We need school bus for school. We ask intervention to give us bus for school, to run around pick up the kids. Police here run around taking the kids, lock them up, wea, no, we need our bus..

Kintore Consultation

This blanket approach on every single *[inaudible]* – it's very frustrating for me to sit here, because it's targeting people, it's a blanket approach, and you're not looking at each person and each community and their individual needs, and there's so many dynamic in things that are happening in our own communities and they're not being recognised and yet we're all being tarred and feathered, and I find that really offensive.

Alice Springs Town Camps Consultations

Facilitator: ... the funding on remote schools is less than urban schools?

Response: Yes, Absolutely. Much less!

I can give you an example there, where one school, when it was ... with the government, and then when it became a private school, its funding went up 230 times ... it was then able to get money that was available to any other school, as an independent school. So, black schools are disadvantaged.

Darwin Public Meeting

Facilitator: ... should we link welfare payments to school attendance? ...

Response: No, because, because if you're gonna link that what about a person whose working right? Are you going to go up to them and take their wages off them? As was clearly said by other people here, we got to encourage our kids to go to school and you know what you've got to look at is welfare. Some people don't want to be on welfare, and they're trying to get out there and make a go.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

Would linking school attendance to the parent's welfare payments help? Possibly, possibly, probably! But we need to get away from this punitive approach. We absolutely need to get, you know, because - stop, stop using the stick. We want our kids to go to school! The people that live out on remote communities that live in communities outside of the bigger centres, they want their kids to be educated! But not necessarily how everybody else says they should be educated. So we need to all work together about what education really means.

Darwin Public Meeting

Why Have You Taken Our Jobs Away?

CDEP was working excellent. You just destroyed it and they had economics building in some of these communities. Like someone said today there was a lot of communities that were dry communities. You just came in with a complete blanket, no consultation, you didn't engage with one black fella to do that. And now you're sitting here wanting us to give you solutions. Come on, it's a bit late mate.

Darwin Public Meeting

Through CDEP Aboriginal people had training, got the training, they got the education that they needed to do that training as well as get a job, and that's like a support base for Aboriginal people and it's gone now.

Alice Springs Town Camps Consultation

We need jobs that are relevant to us. Jobs in the city are not relevant to us here. We need jobs that are relevant like land management, cultural protection ... Land management, the culling of camels and feral animals, the looking after and protection of the waterholes and rock holes. We need jobs which help us protect our cultural identity and that, but also help us the other way and we also need jobs like maybe making a farm. We need funding to be able to set up things like a farm.

Kintore Consultation



Maningrida Consultation Participant

We need more funding to create employment, create training for our Indigenous people. By the time it goes next year where are all the Indigenous people working now going to go? People lining up in the Centrelink. Have you got jobs for our people? We need to work together. We need that professional people here to come to work with us, to train us, to get our people here trained, to get qualified to be a plumber, eh?

Maningrida Consultation

... the cutting of the CDEP ... force a lot of the Aboriginal educators out of the schools. A lot of those teachers were employed as trainees or in support roles that were employed through Community Development Employment Programmes and they had a crucial role in getting kids engaged in the school, making them feel familiar with the education process even if it was in English. And they played that crucial role and they've been forced out.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

... at the height of CDEP you had ... people working across the Northern Territory providing really basic necessary services in communities. As I mentioned before, they were teacher support roles, they were also municipal support roles, fixing houses, maintenance, sewerage, bus runs, all of those kind of things you need for a community to function have been abolished since CDEP was reformed and told you're only getting a Centrelink wage.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

So, I think we really need to look at a massive replacement programme for CDEP that actually pays proper wages, gives people proper qualifications, stops people being on income support or at the behest of Centrelink, and recognising those jobs as actually performing a vital function in the communities and giving people a wage and a sense of dignity when they go to work.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

So the garbage collection went to tender. The bunch of Yolngu guys doing it, three or four days a week, whatever. The white contractor brought in a great big automatic garbage truck ... So jobs went. Same with the ... all the landscaping now is done by ...

Yirrkala Consultation

Nhulunbuy is the fifth largest town in the Northern Territory. It's a regional centre. It's got a hospital, it's got Northern Territory Government, Australian Government, Local Government. It's been there for 42 years. There is virtually no Yolngu employment in Nhulunbuy, apart from a few people in the community in health and education. There is no Yolngu employment in the Northern Territory or Australian Government industry.

Yirrkala Consultation

We need support for our Elders to implement their sort of programmes, that sort of thing. Like the women with the bush medicine and that. They [muffled] run a business selling bush medicine and that and making shirts with [muffled] designs on ...

Kintore Consultation

There are many women who in this community are capable of working, that will work, but the removal or the gutting of the CDEP, and I have talked to you (Jenny) a number of times about CDEP. But the removal of the CDEP has taken away the opportunity for organisations to develop and create enterprise to keep these young women in jobs. And I know that the female ranger programme, and I look at those women and they do a fantastic job on country.

Maningrida Consultation

And one of the suggestions ... is that we give employment to senior Indigenous women and men and particularly those who were trained as Aboriginal Health Workers ... to live within their own communities to work on health issues with families so they can go visit the house, speak the language and they know their communities. But there aren't really any jobs in most communities at the moment. There's no funding to resurrect if you want Community Health Workers. ... *[clapping]*

Darwin Public Meeting

Can we get support from the Shire? Shire *[inaudible]* there's maybe 200 people out of work. ... Create employment like he said how the government's going to help us ... how are you gonna help us?

Galiwin'ku Consultation



Galiwin'ku Community Consultation

We Are Confused by What You Tell Us

... since the government took over there's the policies, there's been too many changes in the policies. "You do!" - "We decide"! That has been the thing. How can we ... as Yolngu people put something forward when the decision, the main thing, is in the hands of the government. And that, for that the people think, "oh, no good trying in the first place. We just want to sit down in country, no good standing up and talking, we want to just sit down." Apathy rules. Hopelessness rules.

Galiwin'ku Consultation

Jenny Macklin says is that everyone loves income management and dah dah dah . . . why is that so many people like income management, when I know for a fact that it's highly unpopular. So why are we, are we getting all this? Is it just spin? Why? If you're consulting properly, why are you only hearing one voice?

Darwin Public Meeting

... I can tell you something from the Aboriginal perspective and you'll turn around and hear something different, and when you repeat it to me it's different, and that is what ends up getting interpreted, what's different. And what has to happen it has to be from the Aboriginal perspective. And until such time that happens, we'll never get anywhere, we'll still have this problem way down the track ...

Alice Springs Public Meeting

... a lot of the growth towns in the community leasings is paid by ABA. ABA is the royalty money ... It goes into a kitty, section 64 (4) ... because the government has discretionary powers, in other words kleptomaniac powers. ... So that means all of Australia thinks that the Commonwealth Government, through taxes, are paying for the leases. We're paying for our own, because all the money that's generated comes off our lands!

Darwin Public Meeting

But what should have happened in the (NT) Response, the police, the health workers, all them know who are responsible, that's who should have been targeted right? And the people that were innocent should never have been targeted. To single out one part of this community of Australia, this country, this nation, which we're supposed to be, ... to target one specific race of people smacks of hypocrisy of all governments ...

Alice Springs Public Meeting

the introduction to this book here (Stronger Futures), it says: "*that we want children to be able to grow up in an environment that's not [locked in the grip of] alcohol abuse and social dislocation.*" That's about as far away from a description of some of the Aboriginal communities that I have visited - such as Ramingining - as I can think of ... There would be more child abuse in the average Canberra suburb than in Ramingining. And and ... the insult to them of being treated all alike was devastating. ... stop making assumptions, about Aboriginal people consulting in the way non-Aboriginal people do ...

Darwin Public Meeting

... through ABA [Aboriginal Benefits Account] somebody up top here plays god. The Minister doesn't allow some of these submissions to go ... up this person, who lives in isolation and got advisors that know nothing about Aboriginal people ...

Darwin Public Meeting

We have so many advisors to the government come from all over this great land of ours we call Australia. And none of those people who are advisors to the Prime Minister and to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs are not expert on Aboriginal people. I'm talking about Aboriginal people themselves. ... But they are not our true representatives.

Yuendumu Consultation

... someone said here earlier that if you design one thing, one size fits all, it's not going to work anywhere. There's so much diversity and richness of culture. The locals, the solutions are actually here, not somewhere else ...

Bagot Consultation



Mutitjulu Consultation

Where Is the Housing We Were Promised?

Every single agreement that was made with us in the initial phases of this whole consultation process with the housing, not one of them has been fulfilled. All of the agreements, public discussions, debates, even the contract, every single lease agreement – there's no way they have been fulfilled properly. Now I know that agreement backwards, upside down, you name it. There are so many breaches in it, it's unbelievable.

Alice Springs Town Camps Consultation

There's over 700 million dollars been spent in the Northern Territory on housing – not one lick of paint, nothing, not one. They come to us and say “*oh, we got to sign an agreement with the Northern Territory Government*” - BULLSHIT – we've already got an agreement with the Commonwealth Government in 1985 which you came here and you saw and so the proof that the Commonwealth Government hasn't assisted these people at all ...

Mutitjulu Consultation

The government claims they cannot build a house unless they have a lease. So how come before the Intervention houses got built without leases? ... The houses in Yuendumu used to belong to us through the Yuendumu Council, Yuendumu Homes Trust. They were given to ... rent to the Yuendumu Council. *[language]* Suddenly the houses were stolen from us, and they belong to Territory Housing. We are being blackmailed and pressure put on to sign 40-year leases.

Yuendumu Consultation



Alice Springs Public Meeting Participant

... there are lots of people living in one house. Some of them are setting up their tent around the house ... When I move around I see a tent is set up on the veranda, under the tree. There is no room inside the house, because the locals are using and sometime others come in long term.

Yirrkala Consultation

How can you improve housing ... is the wrong question! How do you stop the overcrowdingness? Jenny Macklin, she promised or she stated that every family should have a house, every child and parent should have a room in a house. In reality that does not happen. And even when the bedrooms and the houses that are being built today, it's not catering for the extra amount of people.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

The kitchen ... doesn't even look like it's been refurbished. ... there is no proper storage if you're gonna have a healthy eating lifestyle. ... got no cupboards, like no doors on the cupboards, and it's just like a cage in the room ...

Alice Springs Consultations

... through our Housing Associations, had a long waiting list of people that are coming onto our town camps. Now scrap that list. Territory Housing has come along with their new list of people. So forget about our list if they want to come on our town camps. They're bringing people in from outside.

Alice Springs Town Camps Consultation



Bagot Community Consultation Participant

Rats. Rats everywhere! In the houses ... They need to check the drain that goes from the rat place. Some person has to check that out. The sewerage goes to the oval ground and stays there.

Bagot Consultation

And I think we need to improve access to health rather than decrease access to health. And one of the problems with the hub towns is the tendency for services to be concentrated in their hub towns whereas other communities use access to those resources which are so essential. ... in Australia we have the highest recorded rate in the world of rheumatic heart disease and that's purely because of overcrowding. We've got massive rates of glue ear also directly related to overcrowding.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

... determinants of health is more than just housing, there's education, there's jobs, it's not just any job. It's actually having control over your work place, getting paid a fair wage for a day's work, that's seen internationally that it's really important and ... the more individual and community control that person has in their life, the better the health. So these are all things that the Intervention has suspended and dismantled. ... Those issues of land and language and law, these are not being talked about in these consultations and these are really key things that need to be changed in the governance approach. *[clapping]*

Alice Springs Public Meeting

We Can't Afford to Buy Healthy Food

... signs [pictures] in clinics saying 'here's healthy food to eat' when it's not affordable or it's not accessible ...

Darwin Public Meeting

... I don't think health problems around the food is going to change because you look at prices of the food and that's because of the transportation, you know. \$5 capsicum in a remote community - it's disgusting. I can buy a power ticket worth that much. And the power would probably last longer than the \$5 capsicum, you know. So you need to look at the prices of food ... Governments should subsidise the fresh vegetables and fruits that come in.

Alice Springs Town Camps Consultation

A loaf of bread \$5-\$6, fuel astronomical, conditions of roads ... in Aboriginal stores, a commitment to subsidising healthy food so that an orange is cheaper than a Mars Bar.

Darwin Public Meeting

We've gotta start getting back to growing our own food in a sustainable way right, and if you've got a store then Harry grows vegetables and Jackie grows oranges ... and it keeps the money in the communities. That's what we've gotta get back to. Or we go hunting kangaroo or ... whatever, you know, that's what we gotta get to, the proper healthy living of food.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

Two very expensive stores (in Yirrkala) - So would people go from here into Nhulunbuy? ... Bloody oath ... by taxi, its \$80 return.

Yirrkala Consultation



Bagot Community Consultation Participant



Alice Springs Public Meeting Participant

Alcohol – 80% of Homelands Were ‘Dry’

When the NTER came in and blanketed everything, well, it actually meant that communities weren't able to take responsibility for enforcing their own drug laws. ... most Aboriginal people do not drink full stop [*murmurs of “That's right”*] and there are an outstanding number of people who do have a serious problem with alcohol, but all the community is targeted rather than just those people who are problem drinkers. ... I think that the way the NTER was brought in meant that painted the whole community as having a problem.

Darwin Public Meeting

We will never get rid of alcohol because white fellas are the ones who supply the grog, who brew the stuff. You tell me where there's one Aboriginal brewery in Australia, then I will shut up.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

Intervention started 07 and now it's four years later. So we are asking you the questions, what has been achieved by all that recording of alcohol sales? ... Well that what's wrong with you! ... Every meeting we come here and have we the same story. We want some sort of an answer.

Bagot Consultation

I think rehab centres should be set up in regionalised ... offenders get released back into the community ... They can ... be rehabilitated out there amongst their people and their families.

Alice Springs Public Meeting



Bagot Community Consultation Participant

Justice, Law, Safety – It's All Linked

The other important thing is the accepting by governments, accepting that Aboriginal people have to live by two cultures that satisfies the cultures, their own as well as the Western culture. Non-Indigenous people only got the one culture, white man way. But that is the other aspect of governance, accepting who we are as the first nation people of this country.

Bagot Consultation

... one of the problems is because there's no-one sitting down with all the Yolngu to say how do we manage your law in this community and how do we manage properly the balanda law? People are getting arrested in the balanda law, but they didn't even know they broke the law. Because we haven't told them about what the balanda law is. They don't know what the balanda law is, but they've broken it.

Galiwin'ku Consultation

And you are same, you toddlers, too for our law. So let's walk, talk, together as Australian citizens ga grow together to be able to achieve a better community for our young children. They are the future. ... You survive in our world, we survive in your world. Thank you for listening.

Galwin'ku Consultation

Even women on the community night patrol were on the morning buses going around and collecting the kids and making sure the kids went to school.

Yirrkala Consultation

We have no night patrol also. Night patrol's supposed to becoming, but that's Blue Hills episode weekly by Gwen Meredith – hundreds and thousands of times – that sort of, that sort of syndrome.

Mutitjulu Consultation

... before, night patrol was handed over to Shire there were a lot of those women, concerned women ... It was representative by the 14 different clan groups of the women who ran the night patrol. We seen a good result of the work of the women under the new fella Dhanbul Community Night patrol, but now I see it, I myself one of the founders of the community night patrol, is that it is falling apart ...

Yirrkala Consultation

... it's really important that the women are not made ... the families, the children and the mothers, are not made to feel they've got to get out of this house because it's unsafe. That house should be safe. That perpetrator, whoever it is, whether it's a male or a female doesn't matter, should be the one removed and put somewhere else, or taken somewhere else.

Alice Springs Public Meeting

You know when justice will be done is when we see a black leader. That's at the Commonwealth and the State Government. That's when true justice will be done for Aboriginal people.

Darwin Public Meeting

