

13 years of failed NT Intervention - First Nations people demand their solutions-

Zoom Forum 19/6/2020

Transcription :

Aunty [Pat Ansell-Dodds](#), Arrernte/Amjatere, Central Australia.

13:26 Larissa Behrendt AO : It's my great privilege now to introduce Aunty Pat Ansell-Dodds, who is a member of the Arrernte and Amjatere nations. She's the renowned artist, a writer, a lecturer, a campaigner for Aboriginal Land Rights, and passing on local Aboriginal history and culture from her own experiences. She's also doing incredibly important work as a member of the Alice Springs Grandmothers Against Removal [GMAR] and remains incredibly outspoken and strong about the ongoing Northern Territory Intervention, and has been somebody who's been for a long time calling for a Treaty. And in recent times, with the Black Lives and First Nations Lives Matter movements, Aunty Pat has been... has begun having positive conversations with Alice Springs Police, and wants to engage them with cultural awareness training.

So, you're all on 'mute' and you can't clap her, but I think we go like this [demonstrates clapping] she can know that she's very welcome. Aunty Pat, over to you.

14:36 Aunty Pat: Thank you. I...when I look at the history of...of Australia and our people here, it was devastating. Because when I was young, our people weren't citizens of this country until 1967, and to me that's appalling. And we didn't get recognized until there was a Freedom Fight [sic?] by Charlie Perkins and students from NSW University. And in my head, with all that problem that we had back then is still here.

15:17 And the way they treating our children is terrible. I've often walked down the streets and told the policeman off, 'Why are you doing that to this kid? He's not grown up, he's a kid.' And those children look at me and ask me to help them. And it hasn't stopped. I've seen that kind of behaviour all my life, but now that this young man that works at the Police Station, he's a police officer, he wants to talk to me, he's tryin' to mend a lot of issues. And I think that's fantastic!

15:54 But we have a racist government that likes just to get funding off us mob, from our communities who has fought very hard through Land Rights, and even in town here we fought over Native Title over Alice Springs, and we won! And they want to change it whenever they please, so it's still happening. They don't have any respect. They wanted people to go to Uluru to sign a paper what they wanted, but that's not good enough, like we have no brains. We have to move forward, keep wanting our Treaty, our rights, so governments can't keep changing policies that affects the lives of our people anymore. It's gotta stop.

Thank you.

16:54 Larissa: Aunty Pat, can I just follow up because you're obviously doing a lot of work around making sure kids stay with family, and I wonder if you can share with us some of your thoughts and observations about how kids need to be taken onto country to heal, and not imprisoned. Can you talk to us a bit about that work that you're doing?

17:20 Aunty Pat: Yeah. I...the Grandmothers group, a lot of us Arrernte mob from here, we wanted our kids, to lower the case...the age that they be put in detentions, lifted higher from 14, not 10, that's important. Now those two kids can go back home to their country. And Chris here, [points] he's from... he's Arrernte and he's got a program for some kids to go back to country and start learning their culture on country and learn how to live.

18:05 And this town, no matter what we do, it's always been 'Oh, Aboriginals, we must...must have done something wrong'. And we're tired of it! But we wanna move forward and start telling our kids to be proud who they are. We go... make them such in a place they can't grow up and look at a future. And we gotta have a future for our kids, no matter which which nation they come from in the Territory, it's so important. And we looking at stuff as well, the bigger picture. We want them to go back to Country and let the old people teach them their culture. To us, even today, it's so important, because that gives us strength of where we come from.

Thank you.

19:06 Larissa: And Aunty Pat, if I can just ask you one more question because we're looking back at what, you know, 13 years on from the Intervention, and I was wondering if you could share with us, you know, what the impact has been on you, and what you'd like to see changed going forward.

19:30 Aunty Pat: One of the big things I feel is that the kids... the government has to give them funding that they were allocated to, after they got...after they fought for their land and set up their own communities; and to have, like, CDP programs so they can go back home to their parents, not stay in Alice Springs and live on Centrelink. It's so important that the kids go back home, 'cos there's schools and stuff there as well. If they come here, they are so mixed up in their head, the whole family, and the kids could run amok. And we have to stop it, send them back home to their country, so they can get a job, give them funding to do that, to run their own councils and everything. And employ people on their communities like they did before when they won their land back. Not just dictate to Aboriginal people every time they want something, be racist! How can you change the racist law to get your funding on 73 communities, and knock them down? That's disgusting!

All right.

Larissa: Thank you Aunty Pat.

Again, Aunty Pat can't hear us clap, but we can all sort of wave and thank you [waving hands]. Thank you for sharing with us Aunty. OK, thank you.

[Later 1:32:25] I'll just check in with you, Aunty Pat and see if there's anything extra you wanted to say, having heard...

1:32:40 Aunty Pat: I think what the other speakers are been talking about... coming together, and we have the same attitude an' what's happening, and it's really good. But I think if anybody else wanted to, they should talk. We all can hear what's going on. Eh, Barb? [addressed to Barbara Shaw]

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Full conversation (1 hr 48 minutes) can be heard directly [here](#)
2 min except with Aunty Pat at [here](#)