

CLC: rebuild community governance urgently



The Central Land Council says the need to rebuild community governance structures is urgent.

CLC Director David Ross says that he's extremely concerned about the cumulative impact of the dramatic changes forced on Aboriginal people in the last two years.

"I am seeing an increased sense of frustration in the bush and at our Council meetings," Mr Ross said.

"People may have different opinions about elements such as income management, but overall, they feel sad and disappointed about the direction of Aboriginal affairs and their children's futures.

"It's two years and more than a billion dollars since the in-

tervention began and really the only tangible outcomes are the big blue signs which are an outright insult to the many decent people out there trying to do the right thing," he said.

"The combination of the intervention and the new shire arrangements for Aboriginal communities has left them feeling utterly powerless.

"We have put forward this view to the Government very strongly in a submission on the future directions of the NT Emergency Response," he said.

The submission says there has been a drastic reduction in opportunities for Aboriginal people, both men and women, to play a role in

governing their communities. Many smaller communities have no representation on shire councils, and local boards are strictly advisory and operate at the whim of the shire.

"This vacuum in legitimate Aboriginal governance contradicts the obvious need to engage and support local Aboriginal leaders in building a future for their communities," Mr Ross said.

"Quite simply, it threatens the success of all NTER measures.

"All of these measures combined have resulted in deep disappointment, disillusionment and anger for Aboriginal people in Central Australia," he said.

CLC saddened by Alice Springs death

The Central Land Council's chairman Lindsay Bookie has said the council is saddened by the shocking murder of a young man with a bright future in Alice Springs recently.

Mr Bookie said he hopes the town will never see anything like the murder of Kwementyaye Ryder again.

"I was shocked and sad to hear what happened," Mr Bookie said.

Mr Ryder was just starting a new job as a park ranger.

His family has made a huge contribution to the Central Australian

region through sport and culture, including the arts.

The CLC has had close dealings with the family, most recently through negotiations over the hand back and joint management agreements for parks in the East MacDonnell Ranges.

Five men have been charged with Mr Ryder's murder.

"We have all got to live together peacefully," Mr Bookie said.

"All of us, all people must work to ensure this can't happen again."

Deal secures more time for Labor

A deal with the Independent member for Nelson, Gerry Wood, has given the Labor Party more time to sure up its government in the Northern Territory after it looked as though defector member Alison Anderson might topple it.

Ms Anderson is the Member for MacDonnell in Central Australia and was the Labor Government's Minister for Indigenous Policy until she resigned from the party saying Labor was wasting millions under the \$672 million Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP).



Above: Newly Independent MLA Alison Anderson

Her resignation from the party and decision to sit in Parliament as an Independent led to a motion of no confidence in the government being put by the Country Liberals.

That vote was taken in Parliament on the 14th of August, but the Chief Minister Paul Henderson's deal with Gerry Wood won his crucial support and enabled Labor to remain in power.

Former deputy Labor leader Marion Scrymgour's return to Labor also helped the party cling to power. Ms Scrymgour had resigned from Labor a few weeks earlier to sit in Parliament as an Independent.

The Country Liberals had hoped Mr Wood would back their attempts to claim government or at least support an election, but he rejected their pleas, suggesting support for Labor would provide more stable government.

The Northern Land Council's CEO Kim Hill called on Ms Anderson to resign from Parliament altogether.

"Ms Anderson's selfish actions and self indulgence has delivered

instability and chaos – not 'peace, order and good government'," Mr Hill said.

"If Ms Anderson truly believes, as she has said, that the feds should come and take over governing the Territory, then she has no choice but to resign immediately. Full stop!

"She has been a minister of the Crown, presiding over Indigenous affairs, and in the Westminster system the buck stops with her, so she must take responsibility for not delivering Indigenous programs."

Mr Hill also criticised the Federal Government for taking too long to build houses under the SIHIP program.

"Not one house has been built under SIHIP in the two years since the Federal intervention," Mr Hill said.

The Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin has repeated her promise to build the 750 new houses and announced a senior government bureaucrat will review administration costs for the program.

In the deal with Gerry Wood, Mr Henderson agreed to several demands in order to retain power. They included the creation of a Council of Cooperation, which will be made up of six members of the legislative assembly, including two Labor, two Liberal and at least one Independent member.

The council will review important legislation.

Mr Wood said he'd support the Labor Government unless there was a case of corruption or maladministration or Mr Henderson lost the leadership.

The next Northern Territory election is due on the 25th of August 2012. Under the current balance of power, Labor has 12 members of Parliament and the Country Liberals have 11.

There are two Independents – Gerry Wood and Alison Anderson.