

# Bligh and Springborg, you have failed Indigenous Queensland

Issues concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities across Queensland have again been left off the agenda as the major parties head into the 2009 State Election.

In 2006 a report into key social indicators for Indigenous people detailed wide-ranging disadvantage in the areas of health, employment and educational opportunities, chronic housing overcrowding and lack of infrastructure and basic services in many communities; in 2009 very little has been done to address any of these major issues.

The Bligh government continues to parrot the Federal ALP government in the adoption of assimilationist or 'mainstreaming' policies at the centre of the Northern Territory Intervention, which are having devastating impacts on Aboriginal communities across the NT.

## *Alcohol Laws and Policing*

Prohibition and punitive laws can never work to address problems of alcohol and substance abuse. Instead it criminalises entire communities and increases the likelihood that Aboriginal people will be victimised or incarcerated through contact with police.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland have been 'moved on' since the earliest days of the state's colonial settlement and police have always had at their disposal the powers by which to socially control the most marginal and disadvantaged sections of society. The move-on laws expand the powers of a police force with no accountability, particularly in relation to Aboriginal people as evidenced by the whitewashing of the death in custody of Mulrunji Doomadgee in 2004 and subsequent criminalisation of the community of Palm Island.

## *Welfare and Work*

While thousands of Aboriginal people are thrown out of employment and training with the national abolition of the Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) scheme under the rationale of 'mainstreaming', the Bligh government has done nothing to ensure that Aboriginal CDEP workers in Queensland do not simply end up on mainstream work for the dole queues, further entrenching poverty.

## **How to vote for Aboriginal Rights**

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**1** *Sam Watson* **2** *The Greens* **3** *Labor*

Both Major Parties supported the Cape York Institute inspired ‘welfare trials’, operating in Coen, Mossman Gorge, Aurukun and Hopevale. Restricting Aboriginal people’s social security entitlements based on ‘behavioural triggers’ is racist policy aimed at the most marginalised communities, imposing punitive ‘income management’ regimes on struggling families.

Neither the LNP or the ALP are in any position to lecture Aboriginal communities about “income management’ when they have routinely failed to adequately address or fully compensate stolen wages to Aboriginal workers.

### *Mona Mona and ‘Unviable Communities’*

Both major parties have accepted the assimilationist doctrine of ‘unviable communities’ under the Northern Territory Intervention. Aboriginal communities who have been subject to decades of government underfunding and neglect are now being blamed for the appalling housing overcrowding and lack of basic infrastructure that any other Australian community would expect. A government eviction notice has recently been rescinded due to the current election for the community of Mona Mona (100km north west of Cairns) after they were refused new housing and services in an effort to force residents to leave their traditional land. Aboriginal communities are viable, and governments have an obligation to provide the necessary funding to address the massive shortfall in health, education, employment and housing to come anywhere close to ‘closing the gap’.

Both party’s, like their Federal counterparts, continue to insist on a blanket approach to Aboriginal communities and on the exchange of basic rights for the provision of government services and funding. These paternalistic, blame the victim policies will do nothing to address Aboriginal disadvantage.

To put Aboriginal Rights back on the agenda a new struggle is needed. The punitive, paternalistic policies that the Northern Territory Intervention represents are slowly being implemented across the country and are a rallying point for all those opposed to self determination. The Aboriginal Rights Coalition is part of building this struggle to make sure next election the rights of Aboriginal people are front and centre.

## **We Demand:**

- Repeal all state Indigenous alcohol laws and hand full control of alcohol management to local Indigenous authorities, and communities.**
- Keep CDEP with proper wages and conditions for all workers**
- No Welfare Trials**
- Repay the Stolen Wages, in full.**
- Aboriginal Communities are viable!– Full funding for housing, health, education and employment needs – with resources and programmes to be governed by local communities.**
- Repeal Racist Move on Laws**
- Stop Black Deaths in Custody.**



## **Aboriginal Rights Coalition**

for more info on the campaign call: 0424 265 730 or  
email: [brisbanearc@gmail.com](mailto:brisbanearc@gmail.com)