



Northern Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

COAG must reinstate Racial Discrimination Act

1 July 2009

Northern Land Council (NLC) CEO, Kim Hill has called on the Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG) to reinstate the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* and to restore Aboriginal people's legislative human rights - rights which are taken for granted by every other Australian citizen.

Mr Hill also said that the Federal Government's failure to do so means that Aboriginal people will continue to have no legal redress under Australian law in relation to the *Northern Territory Emergency Response* laws i.e. the federal intervention.

"The Racial Discrimination Act was suspended with the express purpose of denying Aboriginal people everyday, common law human rights so that the federal government could implement its intervention into every aspect of our lives," he said.

"This does not happen to any other Australian citizen.

"The Prime Minister has acknowledged that fixing Aboriginal disadvantage is the most intractable problem facing Australian governments since Federation. Yes Prime Minister, you are right but now is the time to fix it," said Mr Hill.

"Reinstating the RDA must be the first step in addressing this "intractable problem". The second step would be to acknowledge that Aboriginal people are not the problem and that it has been much more the gross neglect of successive governments that has caused "the problem".

"All levels of government must consult us, include us in the discussions and the decisions affecting our lives, and give us the opportunity to make informed choices on how to live our lives – the same right given to every other Australian citizen."

"Enough is enough and the time has now come for all Australian governments to show Aboriginal people that they are committed to re-engaging with us in good faith, and so that we can work together in addressing Aboriginal disadvantage."

COAG is meeting in Darwin on the country of the Larrakia Traditional Owners.

Ends.