



# Northern Land Council

## Media Release

### **NLC Full Council demands genuine Aboriginal involvement on intervention policies:**

*Immediate restoration of Racial Discrimination Act a must*

**13 November 2008**

At its 95<sup>th</sup> Full Council meeting the Northern Land Council (NLC) has called for the immediate restoration of the *Racial Discrimination Act* in the Northern Territory and for Aboriginal organisations and individuals to be genuinely and directly included in developing policies as the federal intervention continues.

NLC Chairman Wali Wunungmurra said that Full Council members reported widespread concern from across many their communities that Aboriginal affairs had reverted back to the “bad old days” of complete government control over their lives.

“We are the first Australians and yet we are still being treated like second class citizens. Our fundamental rights have been denied and we have been once again totally ignored and excluded from the policy process,” Mr Wunungmurra said.

“The Australian Government must demonstrate its commitment to closing the gap of Indigenous disadvantage and to legitimate Aboriginal participation in the process, by immediately restoring our fundamental rights and involving us in the policy process during the transitional and long-term development phases of the intervention,” he said.

“As resolved by this Full Council I will be writing to Indigenous Affairs Minister Macklin inviting her to come to our next Full Council meeting to make clear the Australian government’s position regarding the ongoing operation of the intervention.”

In relation to the permit system Mr Wunungmurra urged independent Senators Nick Xenophon and Steve Fielding to support the Australian Government’s legislation to reinstate the permit system over towns on Aboriginal land.

“I ask that Senators Xenophon and Fielding carefully consider the Aboriginal view on the question of permits. I urge them to avoid the hype and irrelevant arguments put forward by critics of the permit system. It is about acknowledging our land rights and the reality that the permit system gives us real control over our communities.”

*The Full Council is meeting this week at Crab Claw Island in the Northern Territory. The Full Council consists of more than 80 traditional owners from across the NLC region.*

Ends.

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