

“Stronger Futures” Consultation

Darwin Public Meeting

28th July, 2011

[00:08] MC: My name is M C I work from the Department of Families, House and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and I'm based in Alice Springs. I have come up here tonight to facilitate this consultation session here in Darwin. Just like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners on whose land we meet here today, and acknowledge the elders past and present. Um, we'll just go through a bit of housekeeping first and a little bit of an explanation about why we're here tonight, and then I hope that that will be the end of my talking and I'll hand over to you to hear from people about their views on the future of the NT Emergency Response.

Um as I said my name is M C and I'll be facilitating the session here tonight, and we've got a number of other staff here from FACSIA. I won't go through them all but there are just a couple of them... B here, is assisting with the power point and there is some other ladies up the front here who will be keeping notes of the conversation here today. That will be a record of the meeting here, and that feedback will be provided back to government, so that they can use that feedback when determining policy in the future of the NT Emergency Response. We've also got James here, up the back, who is able to interpret should it be required. James, maybe if you could just come up here and explain to people your role briefly, and that J will be available to interpret if anyone needs it.

[02:00] J G: Thank you (laughter) Thank you very much, ah I'm from the Aboriginal Interpreters Service, I've been in the service for... this is my eleventh year, and I'm accredited interpreter with NAATI. The NAATI is the highest qualification in the whole Australian history. There is three of us who have got that certificate ever Aboriginal person found in Australia. Um our role, our role is not to take side, we are being impartial, and ah I have been doing work in Milingimbi and Raminginning recently, tomorrow I have got to go to ... in Adelaide River doing same thing. And ah we just passing a message from the facilitator, with the facilitator passing a message from the Federal Government with this new Intervention.

And our role, our interpreters role only is to interpret what the message being said to ah Yolngu people, and then Yolngu people talk back in language, ask question or what they want, then we interpret that to facilitator or whoever are transcribing so are writing that information up about this new Intervention. So that is what I'll be doing here if you need me you know, but it is ok because there no language speakers here, only J there, I call him 'son' sitting up the back there. Yow'. He talk language.

So yeah that's our role. We don't take sides, um for anyone. We are impartial and we are independent interpreters to help people understand what story is about. Thank you.

(murmuring....)

Yow' I speak Yolngu Matha, (speaks in language for a while...) Manymak. that mean good.

[05.21] MC: Thanks J. Um there is tea and coffee just outside. By all means help yourself, you don't have to wait until the meeting's over. Um there is also toilets out to the right um as well, and obviously if we had to evacuate we'd go out to the right and down the stairs.

Um... alright well now we'll start talking about the presentation and why we're here today. So basically the Australian Government wants to go on working with all people in the NT about the future of the NT Emergency Response. Um we're here today to listen to your ideas about what still needs to be done to improve things. Um some people would be aware that the NTER consists of a number of um measures, some of those are legislated measures and some of them are funded measures so some of the legislated measures included alcohol restrictions, pornography restrictions, um store licensing and income management. Some of the funded measures included additional school teachers, additional police and associated infrastructure. Now, a number of those measures come to an end in the middle of next year, um the legislated measures certainly come to an end um next year so the government needs to make the decision what to do after that – do the measures continue, do they remain the same, do we build on what already there, and part of the reasons for these consultations is to get people's views on those measures and get people's views on how things can be done better.

Other people would be aware also that when the NTER commenced in 2007, 12 months on a review was conducted of the NTER. Ah that review made a number of recommendations, one of which was to reinstate the Racial Discrimination Act. Ok government committed to doing that and they did in fact reinstate the Racial Discrimination Act in so far as it related to the NTER and to do that they had to redesign some of the measures. One of those was income management. Originally it was specifically to where you lived. They redesigned that so that it now applies across the whole of the NT, and therefore it is now no longer a part of the NTER. It is now just a welfare reform measure, that applies across the whole of the NT. And in fact and has been rolled out a similar income management measure has been rolled out in a number of other places in Australia. So that is no longer part of the NTER.

The other thing that government did commit to was resetting the relationship with Indigenous people. They acknowledged that the way the NTER was, the way that it was introduced was not entirely appropriate, and they committed to resetting the relationship, going back and talking to Indigenous people about the future of the NTER ,and that's why we're here today.

So basically from that first review, government did listen to what people said on the ground, they made a number of changes and they will continue to go on listening and make the necessary changes as we move forward.

So today we'd like to talk about the future. Whilst we can talk about what's happened in the past, and quite often in these meetings people bring up issues about what's happened in the past, what we'd really like to hear from people today is what can we do in the future? How can we build on initiatives and measures that are already there? What can we do in the future how can we make things better? How can we improve the high levels of disadvantage that we see in NT communities? So I'd really encourage people to think about, you know, have a focus on the future, think about well, what can we do, you know we're here to get ideas we'll be recording them, and then that will feed into government policy.

Um there is a number of topics that government has outlined as priorities. A discussion paper was released in June 2011 and there is copies up the back there if people haven't seen them that's the discussion paper. Its also available on the website indigenous.gov.au. I understand that some people had trouble printing it and it's pretty small so we'll have a look at that. Um but that is the basis for the discussion that we're having here tonight and in other communities. Um this meeting tonight is one of a lot of meetings that we're having across the NT. So we're doing public meetings in all the major centres; Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice and Nhulunbuy. And we're also doing community meetings in the 73 prescribed communities. We're also doing ah town camp meetings, we're also doing one on one meetings so the government business managers that are located in the prescribed communities are meeting with community members having one-on-one meetings, small group meetings, doing a lot of various consultations to try and get the best information that we can from community members about the NTER measures.

So, you know, this is not the only forum where people can have a say, there is nothing stopping people from writing to the minister as you would for anything else. So you can do that. Whilst we're not asking for written submissions, um there is nothing stopping you from doing that. We're also holding a number of meetings around Darwin with service providers, and some key organisations. I did one with the legal services today. So those sort of meetings will take place as well so this is not the only forum and by all means afterwards if you want to have a discussion then we can put you in touch with someone so you can have a discussion later on.

Um there is N C (sp?) here at the front, she is the regional director North for FACHSIA. She looks after the Indigenous Co-ordination Centres in the top end and most of the government business managers out bush. If there is operational issues that come up tonight, that need follow up immediately, then N will make sure that those issues are followed up. Sometimes, people bring up specific issues that we can sort of follow up straight away and try and rectify so we'll undertake to do that if people bring them up. And if you want to discuss specific issues than maybe it is best to talk to N immediately after about those sort of issues.

(pause)

So as I said the discussion paper was released just in June, and there's a number of priority areas that government have identified that are very important to build on moving forward.. um.. school attendance and educational achievement is one of those key priorities as is economic development, jobs and tackling alcohol abuse. There's a number of other priority areas that were in that list before and we'll try and work through all those areas tonight.

Now, the conversation is not just restricted to those areas, if people want to bring up other things we'll hear what you have to say, we'll note it down, that will get fed back in to the policy mix as well. So it's not just restricted to that, but it's important that we try and get through these particular areas today (coughing).

Umm.. one last thing and then we'll sort of get into the conversation, and we'll have someone roving around with this mic, if people wanna when they're talking, talk into the mic, some people may not want to use it. When we do write things down we're not going to attribute it to anyone in particular, so not that I know a lot of you, but if I knew a particular person, I wouldn't write that Mary Smith said ex ex ex. We would just write down what was spoken and when it goes, gets fed in to, er, the process the only thing that government will know is that it came from the Darwin Public meeting and it won't be attributed to any particular person. So you don't have to be concerned about um that you weren't, that about your anonymity.

Alright, um, you've probably heard enough from me, we might go to the first topic and as I said we don't have to follow this order but, you know, schooling has been identified as being very important and government are committed to ensuring that that children go to school and, um, it's been identified in most of the consultations that it is very important to everyone. So, I'd be interested in people's views on schooling, there's a number of questions up there just to prompt people about education and, you know, about how can, how can children get a good education in community, how can we get parents to understand the importance of education and things like that. So I'll be interested in people's views from here about some ideas perhaps about how we try and get kids to school, how we improve the educational system and how we get some good outcomes.

So would anyone like to kick off?

[15:36] JG: My name is J. Ah look there are 35, 45 schools in the NT, some of them don't even have running water after 30 years. Um where kids have high attendance. I remember one report in 2003 said that one school had 100% attendance for the year it still doesn't have a toilet at the school after 30 years and it still doesn't have running water at the school. Will the government be addressing those issues?

[16:08] MC:Well,as I said specific issues like that really need to talk to Nareilly about you know obviously

if there is an issue with a particular infrastructure well then of course we will look at that but the idea tonight is you how can we improve things in the future to make sure that the infrastructure is appropriate, that kids do get to school, that we get good outcomes.

[16:33] JG: So what I was trying to say was that this school and many other schools on homelands where kids do go to school every day the government doesn't support the school in a lot of these places. And I think a really good idea where people show local initiatives is to actually support those initiatives. So where this school that has a 100% attendance, then it should get a school but if we try and do things in a white way then it won't necessarily work.

[17:02] MC: Yep ok so that idea about um about supporting schools in homelands we'll certainly note that down, and that will get fed in to the mix.

[17:13] M: My name is M um I've actually been in the community sector for 25 years, um I think its safe to say that this, as far as schooling in concerned, this is not just an Indigenous issue in the NT, it is across the board, Australia wide. In QLD and NSW we have children disengaging from school at the age of 9 and 10 years. So I think to specifically put this into an NT perspective we need to acknowledge that it is not only an Indigenous issue it is more an educational issue – not so much the kids and the families.

[17:52] N: My mane is N, I'm in the child protection area but one of the main concerns is where the government spends a dollar for each child in the urban area, a concern there is raised. I mean one of the things that came out of Wadeye, that um when every child went to school there wasn't enough chairs and desks for the children to sit on so its like the children in remote are getting 50c to the dollar, and that needs to be at the same level as well, so that is another concern. Resources at the school to support the children and the parents and make sure that the children are attending school.

[18:35] MC: So are you saying the funding on remote schools is less than urban schools?

Many voices: 18:39 –18:42

Yes! Absolutely. Much less.

18:42 MC: OK

18:45 JG: I can give you an example there, where one school, when it was ... with the government, and then when it became a private school, its funding went up 230 times the case study because it was then able to get money that was available to any other school, as an independent school. So, black schools are disadvantaged.

19:06 MC: Ok, Thanks.

19:08 Woman A: I don't have a question I just have a couple of comments, um just in relation to some of your point around discussion. And... we know, because you tell us and its up in front of us, that the government considers school attendance to be non-negotiable. Um, our families know how important it is for our kids to be educated. So, you know, that's like, a bit, inflammatory to me anyway. We're here about the future. The other point I want to make is would linking school attendance to parent's welfare payments help? Possibly, possibly, probably! But we need to get away from this punitive approach. We absolutely need to get, you know, because - stop, stop using the stick. We want our kids to go to school! The people that live out on remote communities that live in communities outside of the bigger centers, they want their kids to be educated! But not necessarily how everybody else says they should be educated. So we need to all work together about what education really means. You know, what does education mean to you, might not necessarily mean to people, out in the communities.

20:38 MC: Yep, and if you say to us, well, should we link it to welfare payments? No? Ok, well if we don't what are some of the ...

20:48 Woman A: No, no, I'm not saying no. I'm saying possibly, probably...

MC: What are some of your views, if we don't approach it from a punitive side, what's some of your views about how we approach it from the other way?

20:55 Woman A: Engage. First, engage. Properly engage- not information sessions, not going out there already having the decisions already made, but truly engaging people to be part of the decision making. If they're part of the decision-making, and they make the decisions about their kids, then you're going to have more buy-in, a lot more buy-in.

(Audience agrees)

MC: And I will also say that, in every consultation that I've been involved in, everyone agrees that education is very important. It's not just government saying that, it's everyone saying it. So, you're right, it is important.

[0:21:33] Woman 1: I think , as well, it comes back to the approach with Indigenous people. What we're saying is you can't just have a general education system that works for mainstream and expect that to work out on remote communities with the low literacy and numeracy skills. We need to adapt it in a

way that is actually giving them the power to be able to control their own education and interpret it in a way that they actually understand it because it's going over their head because it's just something they can't cling on to. If we can just modify it a little bit and look at ways that you can connect it to the lifestyle ... parents love education, kids love education, it's all about the way it's delivered though i think.

[0:22:19]MC: On a practical level, do you have any ideas or thoughts, or is there a model or a way that's working in some place or somewhere that you think would be useful?

[0:22:28] Woman 1: Absolutely, I think, yeah, empowering the people by giving the curriculum to have some say by the Elders because they know best the way their people actually learn best and being able to connect mainstream culture to their traditional culture in a way that they can actually understand the importance of certain things by making that correlation I think is just invaluable. And once they have that power to be able to have some sort of say over what their children are actually learning and the method in which it's being delivered... it would just make leaps and bounds, I believe.

[23:03] [some discussion in audience re seating/crowding at the door of meeting]

[0:23:18] MC: If we can just use the mic because there are some people outside.

[0:23:23]MD: Hello, my name's M. Just speaking on that point in regards to needing locally-based solutions rather than a general curriculum for everyone, I think the decision by the Northern Territory government - the First Four Hours policy - which was about cutting bilingual education and just having it for the last hour of each day ... I think that was a real step in the wrong direction. I understand that you're here representing the federal government but there was a study on it called "No Walpiri, No School" and that showed that in the Walpiri-speaking schools that attendance was dropping once the schools were no longer bilingual. So I think that's something that really needs to be looked at.

[0:24:10]A?: Just [inaudible] I agree that we should be looking at solutions but I just want to make a comment about some assumptions that we've been making. For instance, the government is now admitting that perhaps it went about things in the wrong way and that now it wants to negotiate with people and listen to people. but there's an assumption that maybe for instance Yolgnu people - I can't say about the desert people but or urban people - but out in Raminginning, I was at the community meeting in Raminginning a couple of days ago. I was also at the community meetings in Raminginning in 2006 when the intervention was announced.

And at that meeting in 2006, people were focused, articulate and angry. They had a great deal to say. I think they misunderstood that the government wasn't there to listen to them and it was there to tell

them what was happening. And on Tuesday people went back and very quietly, and I thought very well, that said 'we're sorry that we didn't listen before but we're here to listen now'. But there was an assumption that that's how you find out what a community wants - you call a public meeting. There'd been a huge tragedy in Raminginning. Very few people came to that meeting.

I think after years and years of not being listened to, people didn't know how to respond to this huge gamit of questions. And one of the Yolgnu men leant over to me and said, "This is not the way that we discuss things like this, in a big public meeting like this with men and women altogether." So although there was all the outward signs of a negotiation and listening to people, from people's point of view in Raminginning, they knew that very little, very little, had been understood about what people were thinking about in that town.

And just on that same point about assumptions, about how everybody does things the same way, in the introduction to this book here (Stronger Futures), it says: "*that we want children to be able to grow up in an environment that 's not [locked in the grip of] alcohol abuse and social dislocation.*" That's about as far away from a description of some of the Aboriginal communities that I have visited - such as Raminginning - as I can think of.

There would be more child abuse in the average Canberra suburb than in Raminginning. Most families in Raminginning are highly functional families. And and... the insult that, the insult to them of being treated all alike was devastating. And so I know you're saying here, "I'm not harking back to the past, I'm looking to the future" but I'm saying unless we can stop making assumptions, about Aboriginal people consulting in the way non-Aboriginal people do, about one Aboriginal community having the same problems as another Aboriginal community, I think we'll miss this next terrific opportunity. Raminginning's got lots and lots and lots of needs but they may not be the same needs as another community somewhere else.

[applause]

MC: And can I just say...

[applause] 27:58

[0:28:00]MC: We understand that people may not want to talk in a meeting environment and at times that that is not the best time. But that is why we're doing a number of things on communities where we have we are having small group meetings where say the GBM will meet with the women or with the men or we get others in to do one-on-ones. Sometimes we'll even go back to the community where the first meeting hasn't gone very well because something was happening. So we're not presuming anything in that respect. We are sincerely engaged with people to try and get their views on what does Raminginning need? What does some of the communities in central Australia need? And that will all feed back and you know then the government can get the views from right across the Territory, because we know that it varies greatly.

[00:29:03] Woman 2: Just started thinking about the school situation overall, as I've said, I think it's not just NT - It's a systemic issue. And that is that young people, they need to feel the relevance, as to how that information, what they are being taught, as to what that's going to do for their future. And if they can't see any relevance, whether it be the content or the way it's being delivered, they switch off. And it doesn't matter what colour, creed, race or anything they are. And it's something I think that our academics really need to look at. And as far as the consultations are concerned, and I'm sure that every community on a daily basis is putting their needs further and further into the faces of the politicians, however here we still are with these needs still not being addressed. So the issues are being raised but consultations - as you say, this is a consultation that's happening - but are the words really getting there? And if they are, are they really being listened to and taken into account?

[00:30:00] MC: I can guarantee the words will get there from these meetings. You know, we are recording them, we send them off, you know, it's all collated in such a way that the elected members of Parliament can read and that that can inform policy decisions.

[00:30:29] LC: Hello my name is L C I saw in the NTG budget report that you have put more money into bringing more teachers to the Territory and improving housing for teachers. And I think that's a good step. I hope that that investment is happening in all communities and not just in the hub towns. And I think what the speaker in front of me was saying about speaking in language... so it used to be that kids would speak their traditional language in grade one. And that gradually over time, they would speak more and more English and by the time I think it was year 10 they;d speak all English all the time. Or by the time I think it was year six I think it was all in English. I'm not sure on that.

But I've heard a lot of old people say that it's so important to them that their young people learn their traditional language. With them not speaking it at that young age and they're losing their language. And that's so important to their culture. And if you want to have the community support the education, you got to get those old people on side and that's what's important to them is their culture and their language.

Also, when they were speaking language, at that early level, it was the teacher's aides that did a lot of the teaching work and the white teachers were doing a lot of the helping. And since we've brought in this compulsory speaking in English for the first four hours, those teacher aides have gone back to doing menial tasks. I think it would be a really good initiative to bring back bilingual education and train those teacher aides to actually be real teachers and pay them as teachers because they're doing a teacher's job and they should be paid like teachers. So more employment of local people to teach in the communities.

[applause]

[00:32:48] MC: Thanks. That sort of feedback and information is really useful. [inaudible]

00:33:04] Woman 3: [inaudible] I don't want to let the point about how critical the role of the GBMs out in our communities. I can't let that go because I mean no disrespect if there are any GBMs in the room, but anecdotally, we don't hear a lot of good stuff. But I, for one, support those critical positions in the community. The point that I would like to make is that we need to make sure that when we are employing people, to go and live in our communities, those communities should be involved in the selection of those people.

Because too many times we've got fellahs going out into our communities who aren't the right fit. And there should be a process right from the start where a community is involved in what they want from a GBM. What does FAHCISA want from a GBM? What does that GBM want? You've got a person who is a potential GBM, so our communities need to be involved in who is gonna live on our communities and who are they gonna put their trust in.

[00:34:16] MC: Certainly take that on board and you know recruitment and retention of good staff right across the spectrum, schoolteachers, nurses, police, the key people in these communities is quite often an area -

[00:34:30] Woman 3: We need to move away from the traditional mainstream way of recruiting and selecting - not necessarily recruiting - but selecting people. We need to move away from that because we need to look at ways that we can involve the community in selecting the right person for the job. And if that means it takes a little bit longer, well, so what it takes a long time anyway. You know, to appoint people to these positions and to get them out there anyway. Just a little bit of a delay in involving the community in the decision-making isn't going to make a lot of difference but it's certainly gonna have a better outcome.

[00:35:10] Woman 4: I want to build on what my colleague at the back here said and another couple of comments. I think it's really important that if we're trying to look at the future, we really have to look at what's happened in the past in order to get there. I know the government is now saying "I'm sorry I know we've made a lot of mistakes". But what that's done is create a lot of cynicism. It's created a lot of "Oh well, here's just another round of talking to us and not listening to us. It hasn't really changed."

And so we need some evidence and some proof that somehow something is different this time. Because so far there isn't any evidence of that. And there's just a lot of repetition and a lot of people think "oh well wait another five years and the intervention will go by and there will be something else". In that climate, it's very difficult to think about future strategies that will really work.

And I'm really inviting the government to take that on board. They've been a lot of mistakes. A lot of things were done really very badly. And, in order to move forward, we really have to be able to acknowledge all of that and go "So how can we really make a difference now? How can we really listen to people?" Because otherwise really I think it will just be all the same.

[00:36:17] MC: Can I just say, I don't want to justify what we're doing, but I think government has demonstrated that. The NTER was rolled out with no consultation and the government reviewed it and

then consulted with people and changed and can I just finish please?

The government spoke to people, took into account their views and reinstated the Racial Discrimination Act, [sounds of shock and outrage from the floor] did a number of other things. Excuse me. The Racial Discrimination Act has been reinstated. [more shouts from the floor] And the government made a number of changes. They amended legislation based on what people said. They took away some of the powers of police based on what people said. Government have demonstrated that they are definitely willing to listen and will make changes and that's why we're talking to people now. [37:21inaudible from floor] I'm just demonstrating that we are showing a commitment to talking to people and we have demonstrated that we'll what people say.

[00:37:38] Woman 5: Thankyou. I think you're role here is to probably listen to what we have to say and not trying to justify. But my concern is when you look at going to some of these remote communities, and the resources that are in there, I mean, for me as an Aboriginal person, I've gone to a community, I might go back in five year's time, I might go "What the hell's ... no changes have happened here." There've been a lack of resources. I think we're kidding ourselves, we're trying to get academic children coming out of those schools: a doctor or a lawyer. And that's not happening.

When we've got fifty cents on the dollar on the costs that the government is paying for children in remote communities, it's a huge big issue. And of course, who wants to go to school? And then if you're trying to attach welfare payments, cutting parents' welfare payments off with children attending school, I think you're just, it's just way outta sight. And as Doctor Chris Sarras(?) stated, on the 7.30 Report I think about a month ago, when he stated that the education system in the Territory is in a pretty bad way, that how can you attach welfare payments to children going to school?

It ain't gonna work because what you are doing is creating lots of social issues in the household with their parents because not every child listens to their parents. And if they don't listen to mum saying they gotta go to school then mum's payments are gonna get cut off. And what happens then? The whole family's gonna be in a disadvantaged situation.

So some of these things and then you've got the councils that have come over the top of communities. You've taken away self-determination in communities today. And they're controlled by these councils in these communities today. And self-determination now is just... you get complacent, you get tired and then, when you don't... and this is all what we're dealing with. There have been many, many years of neglect and abuse by both governments.

[applause]

[00:39:53] MC: I suppose the question is when you say don't go down a punitive measure, but... So what do you suggest? [inaudible from floor]

[00:40:00] Woman 5: What do I suggest? Well when we look at Dr Sarras, when he took over a school I think it was in Queensland? There was no one attending school and all of the sudden in a short period of time he had a hundred percent. So that's one scenario that you should possibly look at. He's very switched on and maybe you need to listen to him and what he has to say at that level.

[00:40:30] SH: Blanket income management needs to go. The government needs to consult with community more. People are different, communities are different. The 'one size fits all' approach that the government likes to impose on communities does a lot of harm. Some people want income management, some people need it. It might be able to help them, make their lives easier, but a lot of people don't need it. And we tell people, the government, we don't want it, excuse me, we don't need income management. We of course managed our incomes fine and they put us on income management and affairs are thrown into disorder. Bills don't get paid. They tell us the bills are paid; the bills are not paid. The government needs to listen to people more... consult, i mean really listen.

[00:41:37] Man 1: Yeah, how hard ... [crying] I've been through the system, taken away as a young, a young child, and still a sought-after statistic on how well the government has treated me. Been out on, on a mission station, returned there 50 years later, and I believe that education in the Northern Territory has gone backwards 40 years. I really believe that. cos I still work on mine sites, and the 29 to 35-year-olds - both Indigenous and white - don't know how to fill out 220 questionnaires to get a White Card. When you don't know the system, as the government wants it to be set out on paper, it's very difficult to answer all these questions and to be able to stand up proud and get a job [crying], because you don't understand the question. Physically, you're capable of doing the job, but according to the government paper, because you don't make the pass mark, you don't get the job. And how do you feel about their dignity? They're not gonna come back again.

[00:43:32] Woman 5: I just want to propose something for the government to consider. Not taking away - I acknowledge that 0-5 are, those development years for our kids are the most important years. Alright? And, can I tell you, there are - there is so much evidence out there. I mean, the Northern Territory Department of Health employs one of the leading experts around young peo- young children. Professor Victor Nossa (spelling?). So, the evidence is there, it's the approach that we need to take. So, just want to acknowledge that 0-5 development years are very important and we do need to find those solutions, you know, the right approaches.

But, in my experience, I go out to Casuarina almost every day, and there's kids everywhere, you know? Whether they're kids from our remote communities, whether they're light skinned, dark skinned, whatever. But never miss a day go by, security guards or other people are talking to these young kids, particularly our young kids and from our remote communities, and talking to them in pidgeon English. Like they don't talk English.

Now I can tell you that those kids have probably got better command of the English language than a lot of those security guards running around out there. Because those kids go to those boarding schools here, and have been for goodness knows how long. The problem, the gap, is that they come into town, they go to those boarding schools, and life's good in town, nobody wants to go home. So we need to make sure that we've got programs, initiatives in place so that, when those holidays come round, there is resources out there to employ those young people back in the communities, working with the schools about what career pathways they want to take, and employing them back there.

Goodness me, we just come off four weeks of holidays. Where else in Australia do you get four weeks in the middle of the year? Now, what are them kids doing? Are they going home? Are they running a muck at home or are they staying in town running a muck? Get 'em back out to their communities where they come from and employ 'em! So you don't lose 'em! There's- we know the issues around workforce recruitment, attraction, retention. We can't even get people to go and work out our communities. So let's look at ways we can get our young people back out there. And we need to put more money in 'em, we need to employ 'em.

[Applause]

[00:46:10] Woman 6: I just wanted to, um, go back to the gentleman before and say thank you for sharing your story. I do understand quite a bit of your pain, my father was stolen generation and I do know how hard it can be.

The one thing that stood out for me, out of that, was the feeling of not being smart enough or worthy enough, that just because you can't sort of put something down on a piece of paper and answer all these questions, that- according to mainstream way - that you're not able to do this job.

For the past several years I've been involved in behavioural change programs, in particular in relation to family violence in Indigenous communities, and the one thing that has just literally broken my heart every single day is that these people, because of the social expectation and the social engineering that is happening around the Northern Territory, their self esteem and their hope is just so far gone that they can't even see the future.

They feel as though they are so dumb, basically, that there's not a damn thing in this country that they are able to do, that they are going to be accepted by the mainstream community. You know, I do my best of course to let them know of the skills they do have, because these people are damned smart, they're just smart in a different way than the mainstream, you know. And this is the thing, as well, I think that things do need to be changed, things need to be adapted to the community, and so they can actually, you know, feel as though they've got some hope, and understand what's going on. Because these people are absolutely brilliant, it's just that they may not fit into the mainstream way of what's accepted.

[Applause]

[00:47:48] PJ: Uh, I'd like to somewhere slightly different. Just looking at the first dot point there, having just walked in and sat down, I thought "Here is the problem encapsulated yet again." Once

again, this is governments talking about "not negotiable". Aboriginal people are consistently voting with their feet. I have never heard an Aboriginal person say "Education is not important for our kids, for our families, for our future generations." The rest of the dot points are all about buy-in. How can we do this? How can we do this? How can we do this? Unless you get the first dot point sorted, and change the whole mindset about what can be placed on the table, this is going to go nowhere.

[00:48:27] MC: So do you have any ideas about how we do that?

[00:48:31] Woman 5: Take it off there! We all know that our kids want to go to school. We all know how important it is for them to be educated.

[00:48:39] MC: Yeah, and I've made that point a couple of times. In all our consultations, everyone's saying the same thing. It's not just government saying school attendance is very important. The community's saying that, people are saying it, family's are saying it... [gets interrupted at 48:48]

[00:48:37] Woman 5: Change it and say the Australian and Territory governments... and we know communities, families consider...

[00:48:55] MC: So, what, how do we work with families to encourage people to go to school? Can we do some more work with families?

[00:49:03] Woman 7: First of all, you need to acknowledge that, up here on remote communities, it's not the same as other Aboriginal communities around the country. It is a very different lifestyle, and, um, what you're sort of like proposing is, what I'm reading or interpreting that to be, is- it is literally social engineering, in that they will be educated the mainstream way, and you will go into mainstream cities and you will work just like the mainstream people.

It's not acknowledging communities, their lifestyle, their culture. It's not acknowledging their heritage, their law, their kinship structures. It's not acknowledging the mounds of work that needs to be done on remote communities, but they need to be done by Yolngu people, Yolngu way. So allow these kids, yes, to be educated - not just mainstream, but Yolngu way as well. And allow them to empower communities. We've got such a small, precious population, here, of tradition and culture. We have the oldest living culture in the world, under siege of the youngest civilisation in the world. And that comes from "Our Generation", the DVD. And it's very true, this same thing is happening over and over again. You're failing. Two hundred years plus down the track and we're still we're we are. Is it any wonder that people are still angry, especially when this has started coming in in 2007.

[00:50:26] TA: Thankyou. T A(sp?) from Darwin. A couple of question. In relation to where we are right now, is there any sort of statistical data than can show a very clear picture in relation to the benchmarks that have been set by this initiative, and whether or not we've even reached any of those, currently, right now.

[00:50:58] MC: We're not here, I'm not here, to give you benchmarks or talk about outcomes or anything like that. There's plenty of ...(TA interrupts)

[00:51:06] TA: Yeah, no you've cleared up the first question, that's fine. So, in relation to solutions, I believe that - in order to achieve realistic outcomes - is that we have a number of initiatives that are met

at a local level, within the Territory government, and there's also initiatives at a federal government level. Why, then, hasn't any type of co-ordination or strategic approach ever been done, where you've looked at programs that have had successful outcomes on the ground, as opposed to coming in and attempting to reinvent the wheel, and come up with little to no outcomes and mass confusion at a community level and also at a government initiative.

Because if we're being told that there are agreements being done, at a COAG level, and all governments and agencies are signing onto these directives, these strategic directions, and then it's going to be filtered down: my question to the schooling and the future initiative is that why aren't we looking at programs that are already working, have success rates, as opposed to coming back in and imposing a whole new system and program that's not reaching outcomes.

Which goes back to my first questions. Because if anyone cannot provide real statistical information to Indigenous people, give us an indication on whether or not this initiative has actually reached any point, then how exactly can we measure and see where we are right now, in relation to this. So, I think, if anything, my suggestion and solution to government is: stop reinventing the wheel. Have a look at what currently exists, we have a number of initiatives on the ground that have been quite successful, over a number of years, that has worked extremely well. And what we have is an imposing set of programs that aren't reaching the outcomes. Because unless you can produce this sort of information, and release it to us, and say "well listen, we are reaching the benchmarks, we are reaching these goals", don't you feel like we're actually travelling around a mountain? Again?

[00:53:03] MC: Well, we're here to ask you, and hear from you, about some of those initiatives. We don't want to reinvent the wheel. If there's models and initiatives out there, that you think would be applicable to achieve some of these things, then, you know, we'd like to hear from you. You don't necessarily have to tell us today. But throughout this process, that's what we want to hear.

[00:53:24] TA: But I thought this would have been an intricate part of the process to begin with, with any type of research going in to look at how to adapt programs. To go in and look at the end result you first need to identify what's currently going on. So already the methodology and the process and the approach has been flawed from day one. Which gives us all an indication of being frustrated- that we're constantly going around. But if you're going to be (unclear 53:48) relook at it, why not start with the core foundation of working out where exactly people are at, whether or not we're reaching the measurable outcomes that are supposed to happen, and then clearly saying, "listen, that doesn't work. Scrap it. Where have we got that's already going fine in the first place? When we had kids actually attending school?" A suggestion.

[00:54:10] MC: Yeah, yep. And we'll write that down, and feed that back. Mm hmm.

[00:54:14] MR: Sorry I'm late. My name's D (sp?) R. I'm sick of all the crap, the spin, that's given by all the governments, since 1901, against my people. All you political parties- the ALP, Liberals - all you've ever done is cause racist political policies against my people, on the verge of genocide. And it's based

on racism.

This intervention - I wear this card (holds up Basics Card chained around neck), right? like a chain. That's the Basics Card. How many of you mob in this room got it? Put your hand up. Truthfully! [Someone yells "no compulsory income management!" then M continues.] Yeah.

What about you guys? None of you, down in Canberra. Your little prime minister, the miniature prime minister, little John Howard, and mad Mal Brough, put this through, through legislation, when Australia is a signatory to the elimination of racism in this country. And everyone of those morons, in the House of Reps and the Senate - except the Greens - voted for this bill to be passed through, put racism against 10,000 people in the Northern Territory. Now that's a fact.

You mob gotta start telling the truth, cos I'm sick and tired of youse. And besides this, all you governments are illegal and fraudulent. Because my people have not given away their sovereignty to this country. So, Gillard, Macklin, the whole lot of youse are a bunch of frauds. And your governments are illegal.

Right, picture this. What you haven't done - I'm a school teacher, right? I'm a school teacher, I come from Wave Hill, Gurindji. What's happened here - I'm also on the Central Land Council, but I'm speaking here as a First Nations person. What you've done is, the Northern Territory government has taken away bilingual education. Education identifies a person. You take it away from the Chinese and see what happens to you. You are taking away their birthright of education, of their language, which identifies you.

And then they want us to join some committees about education. You got it all wrong, you idiots. You have been doing it for 40 years and more. When are you going to wake up and start doing that word up on the board there called "consultation"? What he should have done, that moron, John Howard should have gone to the police stations, should have gone to the schools, and the clinics, and see who creates domestic violence, who bring in the grog, who brings in the the ganja. Yep, it was made easy by putting 10,000 of us through Centrelink payments. That's the truth.

When are you gonna consult? Really. Cos a lot of you mob have gone out to my people, and you've gone out there for two hours, and then taken off. Gone back to suburbia. Your little towns. Where[as] we are on this. I couldn't take my grandkids to the show on this (holds up Basics Card). I can't even buy icecream! So, come on, how about you getting on this Basics Card like me, you fool!

[Applause]

[00:57:10] MC: Yeah, so, what do we do for the future?

[00:57:14] MR: What you do is get those scrawny people who run this country, voted by you people and others in this country- come and sit with us. And sit down and listen. Cos you're one tribe that I call are deaf. You listen to us, cos I'm very angry. I am sick and tired of this, cos all you've done is slowly killing us off. Through different policies. And one of it's this.

And I'm disgusted in our representatives in the Northern Territory, and all of you politicians, and you public servants. What you do is sit down on the ground with us, come out and see what it's like. What do you live in? You live in a \$180 room up here somewhere? We live on the ground, we don't have houses properly. Overcrowding. The cost of living is 200%. The cost of fuel is that much. We can't even travel anymore because this moronic government in the Northern Territory has now brought in shires. We can't travel anywhere. If you want the real answers, I'm telling you, alright? It's time that you whitefellas - and that's what you are, white governments - stood up and started listening to us. Cos I'm sick and tired of youse.

[Applause]

[00:58:26] MC: Alright, look, I think it's very important that we don't get personal in all of this. We're here in good faith to hear from people [heckling from audience. R yells "income management IS personal, buddy"]. 'Scuse me. I just think it's important that we can have a two-way conversation here. We're here to listen to people, about their views, and we'll note that down.

I also just wanted to say that the Northern Territory Emergency Response is being evaluated. And so, in the future, that data and that information will be available around, you know, what outcomes has it achieved, and, you know, has it worked, has it not worked, what measures are doing ok and what haven't. And it's about saying, today, you know, what do we do for the future. So, employment is an important part of the future- people with jobs. How do we get people into jobs in the future? What do we do about creating employment, especially in remote communities? [Heckling from audience-unclear] We've come to ask peoples view, and ideas on that. There, you know, there's some questions there, that are posed, and we'd be interested in people's views.

[59:52] Woman off-mic, unclear

[01:00:07] PJ: The question you're asking about the future, uh, I can recall- was it two years ago? In the hotel next door? We had a two-hour consultation on this very same stuff [Woman interrupts: "Here. It was right here"] So now we're in the pub next door, and we've got two hours. I'd think that all the submissions that were made at that time - many of which were put on your own website - in terms of particular ideas, are already there.

But the main point I want to talk about is the question you asked me. The intervention is still suffering from the Mal Brough mindset, which is all about "We're in power, we're going to tell you mob how it's going to be". It's that, it's that, it's that telling people. It's not listening to people. It's not standing alongside and working with people. We can go through all the dot points you like, in terms of particular ideas, and probably some good ideas will come forward. But go back to first principles. Please think

about the whole way in which you're relating - or, I think we've seen today actually not relating- to people who are affected by the intervention.

[1.01.19] Woman 8: You were asking for solutions, one of the things that I'd like to put forward is why isn't the government and your group talking to the elders? The people that have been going down, going down continuously down south talking about the intervention. They're the people that you should be talking about to come up with the solution. I'd like to actually read here an article from Djiniyini Gondarra [clapping] who says "Let's on day, let's hope one day things will change and we will be respected as real sovereigns, sovereign people. Then other Australians will sit down and talk to us about some real solution."

And that's what they're asking this group of elders that are walking around and travelling around and talking about the problems but they want to sit down and be respected and be treated equally. And, as he says, when the government goes overseas and talks to diplomats overseas they treat them differently to what they treat Aboriginal elders out in the community and it's about time that they were treated with respect and dignity and sat down at the table as equal people. That's all I want to say.

[01.02.45] Woman: Inaudible

[01.02.49] R: He's selective in who he listens to. You listen to people like Bess Price and, dare I say it, all the Uncle Toms. It's not universal it's not consultation at all.

[01.03.00] MC: As I said at the start, we're doing a number of these consultations. We're talking to community people, we're talking to elders, we're talking to Traditional Owners, we're talking in groups, we're talking to key stakeholders, we're talking to non-government organisations, service providers. We're trying to get as broad an input as we can. So –

01.03.21. Woman 8: You could just start talking to Aboriginal people. At the end of the day, I mean to say every time you come across a report what does it say? "Aboriginal people need to take responsibility" You cannot take responsibility if you don't own the problem. Until we own it then we can take responsibility.

01.03.40 MC: So what ..

01.03.42 Woman 8: It's about time people moved away you've got too many bureaucrats that come in , tell 'em what to do and then turn round and say "you need to take responsibility". Well, hang on, you're telling me what I should do. You're asking for a solution so let me work with that solution, let me work with the rest of the group in the community.

01.04.00 MC: So in a practical sense, how do we get people to take ownership of that problem?

01.04.05 Various voices: Listening

01.04.10 Woman 6: Taking a wider view open to different models and different interpretations

01.04.18 MC: So being flexible in their interpretation

01.04.20 Woman 8: But don't walk away with the information and then you go back into your office and then you interpret what you want to interpret. You've got to understand what the people are really

saying. What does it mean? Look through their eyes, understand. Walk in their shoes to really understand what they say.

01.04.36 A?: Spend a month on a community.

Various voices: Yeah, yeah

01.04.40 MC: Now, where's , we've lost oh sorry

01.04.45 Woman 9: Just from this gentleman sitting out the front here was actually in this room here when we spoke about the CDEP some many years ago, not so 2 years ago? Yeah. I recall sitting in the same room talking about CDEP. Anyway what i just want to raise about CDEP umm the fact that changes need to be made. I'm aware that in CDEP in the past, and I'm not sure about the present but, umm there was no superannuation paid for CDEP participants and as such people were on CDEP for nearly 20 years. And umm what I'm hoping now if we're looking for the future that superannuation is paid because they've got nothing, they haven't got a nest egg that they would have when their retiring age does come. So that was one of the things that was actually raised in that CDEP consultation then and there's a lot of things in there that you might like to have a look.

01.05.46. MC: There's a lady up here who hasn't had an opportunity yet

01.05.54 JD: I'm JD I chair the Senior Territorians Advisory Council. I've just come back from Alice Springs where we talked to senior women who are Aboriginal Health Workers. And one of the suggestions that they make is that we give employment to senior Indigenous women and men and particularly those who were trained as Aboriginal Health Workers and who walked away for that for a while. But they could be brought back in with a Certificate 111 to live within their own communities to work on health issues with families so they can go visit the house, speak the language and they know their communities.

But there aren't really any jobs in most communities at the moment. There's no funding to resurrect if you want Community Health Workers. So that was a very strong suggestion because then if you bring all the older women back into what they were originally trained to do they're in the community, they're working with the families, they can get the kids off to school, or help explain why it's important to get them to school ... But it's putting respect back in on elders so they have paid employment.

01.07.05 Clapping

01.07.05 Woman 10: I'm a workplace trainer and assessor and I've been training in remote communities for the last 6 years plus. And what i'm finding my frustrations with, as far as, if we're talking education and going on not only among young people but going on to adulthood etc umm we used to have a funding program called Flexible Response Funding and that was the program that was supposed to be there with the most flexibility to provide training to Indigenous people.

It's now been turned around and it's been relabelled it's now the Indigenous Response Funding. As a result of that you try and get anyone get funding for an Indigenous person at a Certificate 111 level, and - keeping in mind Certificate 111 is the minimum industry standard across anything. It's the minimum qualification that actually gives people career pathways. Indigenous Response Funding does not cover that. It will only cover skillsets from Certificates 1 and 11.

It's making a very, very harsh judgement in my mind that er Indigenous people aren't capable of anything else. It also uses the fact that we've got really bad literacy issues, it's literacy only as far as the English language is concerned and the English way of life. You can train people who do not have the fantastic English abilities that the rest of us have. You can train them at a Certificate 111 level. It's up to a trainer to be able to make that relevant and that contact with that person and to be able to relay the whole content. The penny drops. So until we actually get around to that – because the other problem is we've got employers, because if Indigenous people go for a job there's automatically an assumption, "oh no there's too much humbug, they're unreliable, they don't turn up, it takes too much to get them up to a minimum standard so that they can hit the ground running. So people will employers will take the more financially viable option and least hassle and they will employ mainstream. So you've got all those things that you have to look at so the funding is number one the assumption about the illiteracy levels is another and that's where your jobs and training goes because you're really treating people like they're only two year olds at the moment.

01.09.31 MC: This gentleman at the back.

01.09.36 SH: Further on the income management problem err the government's now claiming that it's not racist anymore because we've got some er non-Indigenous people on it as well. But um 94% of people impacted are Indigenous and um most people don't need income management. It's, it costs the taxpayers of Australia over \$4000 per year per person. It's just because the government wants to look like it's being tough in the eyes of conservative voters and we've heard stories about people for example in Kalkarindgi made to do 30 hours a week work for the dole and they get the basics card that's just ridiculous, it's slavery.

01.10.35 MC: All right thanks for that umm. We might move on. Alcohol is another area that has been identified as an issue that needs to be looked at in the Northern Territory.

01.10.47 Woman: Close down all the pubs

01.10.51 MC: Close down all the pubs? What do people think about some of the questions posed up here about are the current restrictions working? Do we retain them? Should they be changed? Shall we build on them? Shall we make them stronger? What are people's views on that topic?

01.11.20 A?: This is a solution, a suggestion: one of the things you could do would be to have an investigation into the role of white people in remote communities.

Murmurs of yes from audience

01:11:34 A?: Because Raminginning was a dry town and much of the alcohol that came into the town was brought in by white people, but it's always suggested to be a black problem. So that would be one thing that the government could do have a really serious investigation of the role and behaviour of white people in remote towns.

01.11.53 Woman: Don't they have special permits in their house some of these people? So they've got rules for one and not for others.

01.12.01 MC: I suppose we'd like to hear from you should there be a permit system? That's why we're posing these questions. Should they be prescribed alcohol free?

Lots of murmurs

01.12.15 Woman 5: I certainly think that we should. I don't know of any other place in Australia where, and correct me if I'm wrong, where you can pull up at the local shop and buy grog and look because our people are so visible, but I tell you what and I'll be 50 soon so don't get me wrong I go down Mitchell Street a couple of times to drink coffee, (background laughter)no, serious and I'll tell you what you don't see a lot of blackfellas down Mitchell Street fighting and carrying on, might be young fellas if they get into a fight but it's not as visible on Mitchell Street the problem as it is in might be out in the Northern suburbs or out along the highways and that so there's a big problem with alcohol full stop in the Northern Territory. So how are you going to pull up and get half dozen out of the fridge and get your bread and milk? I say anyway that you should reduce the places that you can actually get alcohol for everybody.

01.13.21 TA: I'd like to support that because when Clare Martin was the Chief Minister I had a discussion with her and one of the issues is that children are going to school and people are in the park drinking at 8 o'clock in the morning. There's been an attack on a child going to school and my concern is , when you go down South you don't buy alcohol from corner shops. The alcohol in corner shops need to go. If you want to get alcohol go to the alcohol shop, the bottle-O where alcohol is provided. And I strongly believe that the alcohol in the corner shops do need to go.

And on the other hand the NT Government just now made a venue policy around the alcohol that you need your licence to get alcohol or your 18 plus card. Now there's all sorts of issues. There's issues with people coming from overseas here, they don't have that plus I don't know how they thought that it's going to bring the measure down for Aboriginal people not to access alcohol 'cos they don't have a licence and they don't have an 18 plus card but you know as I was part of the Aboriginal Legal Aid Board we used to give out IDs that was funded by the government so Aboriginal people can access Centrelink payments.

Now those cards were also accepted in Centrelink but now all of a sudden and the and the (inaudible) Larakia Nation also had the ID cards but they're no longer accepted to get alcohol. Now I think that's a serious racial discrimination, a breach of the Racial Discrimination Act and we've put that forward but it's still just gone forward under the NT Government in doing that. Yeah but , you know we do have a problem with alcohol here in the Territory, we're just bloody good drinkers

Laughter

01.15.16 PR: Oh hi there. One other thing I just wanted to note and I'm sorry this is looking back rather than looking forward but it's utterly rubbish that Howard and Brough claim the they were tough on alcohol. Under the laws brought in by the NTER the penalties to grog run were actually reduced because they were made the new Federal laws which were far, far weaker than laws that were already in place. There were a whole lot of other schemes that were destroyed as a result of the NTER.

The town camps were often in independent negotiations with police to try and make their communities

dry and find out ways of policing that. There were often different rules for different places some town camps had people who said that they were fine with alcohol being there, some didn't they wanted a multi-layered approach it was a bit of a pain for the cops they were dragging their feet on it, but they were willing to work with the communities to try and have solutions. When the NTER came in and blanketed everything, well, it actually meant that communities weren't able to take responsibility for enforcing their own drug laws.

When communities have responsibility for it it's usually quite receptive and it also has to be stated, and I don't know why it has to keep on being stated but it does most Aboriginal people do not drink full stop [*murmurs of "That's right"*] and there are an outstanding number of people who do have a serious problem with alcohol, but all the community is targeted rather than just those people who are problem drinkers. I think that's a serious, serious problem and I think that the way the NTER was brought in meant that painted the whole community as having a problem.

01.16.41 Woman: It does with those signs

PR (continuing) Well, that's the other thing I mean it's interesting trying to visit some of these communities where these damn blue signs are a hell of a lot more legible than the signs actually welcoming you to the community. (Chorus of agreement from participants) Of course loads of people have tried taking them down. I think there do need to be changes to those signs as well. I think it's shameful to have those signs there and I think it's actually stopping things from moving forward. So like people said before there needs to be target [of] drug runners, and let's face it, most of them are white, there needs to be those signs removed and there needs to be really community engagement in how to enforce the really strong drug rules and grog rules that are in place in those communities

Applause

01.17.24 MR: I'm not going to apologise to anybody full stop umm alcohol Australia has a big alcohol problem so why don't they do it to all the other states because if you pick up every paper in the morning there's domestic violence, there's everything else. But they target us again on this alcoholism. The trouble is this government's weak, so is every other government because there's such a thing in law called breaches, all right. You can walk into these pubs here now and everybody in those pubs have all broken their breaches through the barman because they're all drunk. You can't sell grog to alcohol people who are drunk.

OK that's a big problem here. All parliamentarians drink, for Christ's sake. Do they drink water?

The other thing this fellow was talking about; the blue signs about pornography. Well, it's created where you live (inaudible), SBS does it, some other television programs. I live at Kalkarindji where this bloke talked about a minute ago about CDEP. We don't see it but we get blamed for it. We get blamed for everything including the weather. So alcoholism, ganga, grog, you name it ...murders and that rapes are

done by people.

What I would like to see done here and it goes on record now that 4 Corners program at Mutitjulu after this was put through, because all this is based on the Children Are Sacred that's the catalyst, the Children Are Sacred Report, and whoever that guy who now comperes, comperes Q and A should be taken to court and also that person who gave the report who spoke up in the Senate Inquiry, which is a law should be jailed. So put that in your report there about 4 Corners making accusations about men in Mutitjulu . All right you slow that program down and look at that bloke now he's one of your department in Canberra and we're coming down there very shortly. (laughter)It's not a threat I'm coming down there anyhow full stop, right I don't give a shit about you mob I will talk about you fellas openly, in the media yeah and guess what's coming? Me, mate.

[1:19:55] MC: (inaudible) A couple of people mentioned signs. There is a process (out/now) available called community to redesign those signs to make them (interjections from audience) If everyone talks at once we obviously can't hear what you say . . . if we can just have one at a time . . . there is a process available where the government will talk to the community(?) about the signs so you know, there can be some changes made there.

[1:20:39] Man 2: My name's [inaudible P?] I work in the area of drug and alcohol. I'd like to support the discussions from behind (me). From my experience, it's actually been disempowering not supporting the issues or the community in finding solutions around alcohol. If anything it's made things worse in town camps here. But that's an observation, not a measured thing. I think there needs to be a lot of discussion and again there's been a lot of discussion about what to do in the future because it was just imposed without any consultation. There needs to be alcohol management plans designed by the communities for the communities and there's a lot of work to be done. There are disadvantages to having alcohol in communities, there are disadvantages to having alcohol in Darwin . . . so the communities have to make a decision about that proposal.

[1:21:39] MC: So, alcohol management plans are being discussed with some communities at the moment.

[1:21:55] Woman 6: Those signs, you're actually labelling to the rest of the world that every single Aboriginal person living within communities are deviants. By putting the alcohol and the pornography. I'd like to ask a question: would you like one of those signs in your front yard, so you can leave that for your family?

[1:22:09] MC: I hear what you're saying and will note that down.

[1:22:15]LC: (inaudible) sign in the front yard saying . . .

[1:22:34] R: My name's R(?) and I believe that ah in all the Aboriginal communities, if you have akibbutz-style built it will be able to curb the alcohol, health and drug problems. And you should use Norforce to administrate (sic) what goes on and all those refugee boats that come here illegally, instead of spending \$50,000 on burning it (sic) why not reconvert (sic) and use it as a surveillance of illegal fish (sic) coming in and use the Indigenous people to go fishing and at the same time have Norforce speaking their lingo, things like that.

[1:23.29] SL: Excuse me, they're not illegal.

[1:23.36] R: I'm not referring . . . I don't mean it in a bad way. The best way to do it we should have three major industrialised plantations on crown land or Aboriginal land and utilise them , stop jailing Indigenous people. Why not put them in a village where they will be able to speak their lingo and (inaudible) work with the government and use our Indigenous people instead of throwing them in jail.

[1:24.18]MC: (inaudible)

[1:24.29] EM: I just want to raise(?) the signs question again because for you it might be a small thing , it's just a road sign. But I think the government needs to rebuild trust in communities. And those signs are actually huge attacks on community self esteem, and trust on communities. So I think rather than telling (them) that GBMs are willing to enter into a discussion with them about changes to the signs, I think communities are sick of hearing that the government is willing to enter into discussion.

Why doesn't the government as an act of faith, of good faith and a display its willingness to act on previous consultations, go out there now and take all those signs down. I think you would get 100 per cent support from the communities. I don't think you need to talk to communities about making changes to the signs. You could go out, you could apologise to each community that has a sign, take the sign down and offer to pay the community to repaint them in really friendly colourful signs that used to be out there, that said 'welcome to our dry community, please enjoy your stay', because these communities were dry before you went out there and put up those signs. That's something very immediate that the government could do.

(Applause)

EM: Employ the community to repaint a friendly sign, laying out what they would like to say to people who come to their community.

(Applause)

[1:26.00]MC: (inaudible)

[1:26.10] PJ: Guys, hear the message again, if you wanna score some brownie points, don't put it back onto Aboriginal people on communities to do the work. You guys put em up, you take em down.

(Interjections.)

[1:26.23] PJ: Ok second point, in relation to the alcohol stuff: before the Intervention, there were 105 declared dry areas in the Northern Territory. They all came about because Aboriginal people, through a series of consultations and meetings, worked with the liquor commissions and had those areas legally declared. OK, some work better than others. But Aboriginal people have a clear history here of working with parts of government to do things that are important to their local community. Having said that . . . alcohol management plan . . . that's a way in which each local community can have its own say (and) work out something that works for it. Because all the communities are also different. I certainly think that's the way to go. Last comment would be in the book (inaudible) you talk about Groote Island alcohol management plan: I hope you're aware that (that) took more than three years to develop, involved stacks and stacks of meetings, but in the end came up with something that was recognised by the licensing commissioner and is now binding in law. Aboriginal people want stuff where the

government works with them and supports them as opposed to ongoing consultations.

[1:27:41] Man: Just getting back to that blue sign: last year in July, I was involved with the Rollout in Central Australia. Eighteen communities wanted the blue signs out(?) – and that was documented. It was documented by ICC(?) Alright? So the blue signs definitely do wanna go, coz the people down there want to put up their own(?) signs. I think the lass down the front there, said they're unwelcoming signs. You drive along the Stuart Highway, you see a sign before you get to the tea tree Amajama(?) country. You see all that, yeah, so those blue signs gotta go.

[1:28:22]R: You can read my t-shirt here made by a friend, and I'm sorry to break the momentum because the subjects we were talking about were right, but I just want to come back to income management, particularly, and I'll finish what I'm about to say to . . . question to both yourself and Senator Trish Crossin up here. First of all, I'll say 'no compulsory' should be 'no blanket' (Basiccard). If we must live with this egregious little bit of plastic . . . let's make it so that some black and white people – some white people need the sucker as well so that's universal fact. My question to both of you here is: is there any consideration gonna be given by the government to emend/rewrite the legislation involving income management?

[1:29:27] MC: So obviously that's a matter for government. But if your point is that you would like them to revisit it and make those changes, we'll note that down and feed back to the process.

[1:29:40] (inaudible)

[1:30:04] MC: Can I just keep going because I know the time's getting away. I'm happy to stay longer if that's what people want, but some people may have other commitments, so there is (sic) some other topics that we'd like to cover and others that people might want to bring up. During the NTER one of the fundamentals was more police stations, safe houses and night patrols. How successful have they been? How can we build on them, on what they've done? Should we change it, should we continue? What are people's views around some of those things?

[1:30:50] Woman 7: I've actually been training Night Patrol throughout the (NT) for the last three years. As far as my patrols are concerned, it's a job that no-one else in this country has to do, which is collecting their own people and sometimes their own family. When you look at notifications in family violence, child abuse etc etc, you need to also look into the context, and I'm not saying that there's any fudging of either of those, but also the interpretation between the cultures as far as what is and what isn't, but also looking at doing things in more Yolŋu-friendly ways.

There is a lot of money going into Night Patrol. There is not enough funding going into their training because of the pressures, because they are a community, they are family and they get humbugged all the time. And you've got a rapid, rapid turn-over of Night Patrol officers, it's incredible, and therefore there's no funds available from the Attorney-General's department to keep that training up to recruit new forces.

Groote Island, for example, I only did one lot for East Arnhem. All of Groote Island, the three communities they have there, for whatever reason they were down, so that entire island - three communities - needed all training, free recruiting, everything. They're not being treated properly as far as funding levels are concerned. Also the issues they're dealing with and the situation. Lawyers and doctors don't deal with their own patients, own families etc and even our own police do not have to police their own people, do them in.

You've got to consider history. Over the last 200 years, here they are enforcing what is seen to be white man's law, white man's ways, so there's extra pressures there again. It really needs to be looked at. It is a vital service and it must be there. There has to be that middle-way between mainstream and Yolngu, because otherwise things will never get better, if it's all done mainstream way.

[1:33:00] MR: I generalise for the 72 communities: What you've done is take away empowerment and governments spruik that word, empowerment. Give us the right to run our own communities, give us the money, don't go to the second party up here in the (NT). You've taken everything else, the tribe that take take. We've got hardly anything to give anymore. You've taken it by legal means. Safe communities? They were safe. Is Melbourne safe? Is walking down the street of Darwin safe at night? I don't think so.

We want what we can give our children. You've got to speak to the kerdinals(?) the traditional owners and leadership, right? That's who you need and the word that comes up all the time, consultation, you're talking to the wrong people. You talk to people who are out on the ground about all these issues, how do you make a community safe? More police doesn't bring it in. I've got two police there(?). My mob know when they go to sleep, they know when they bring the grog in , when the violence happens and it happens in every community.

I'm asking you and whoever is running this show, come to Kalkaringi on the 26th, 27th and before that, the Central Land Council meeting and you will listen to 200 people telling you the same thing I'm telling you, about all the stuff here that has been going down. This is an indictment on the political parties of this country, what you've done to Aboriginal people. We've found that . . . we haven't given up the fight, but when you got me in a corner, they'll come out fighting like everybody else, about how all this and this is wrong, because you forgot to consult. And that same word again, you used that blanket approach to make it easy. . . . to make safe communities: you sit there with the elders, these men and women, the kerdinals(?).

People who can speak and understand, not these mob that go around with you. They wouldn't know if their behind was on fire. What I'm saying is go out . . . you need another round of consultation, not just this one and you got the closing in August. You need another round, so tell your prime minister or whoever's pulling her chain, you need another round, and sit down with people, not for two hours, because that's all your consultation is . . . and how many people in here, 100? You can't listen to everybody. Go out to those communities and sit there for a week with us. See what it's like and I'll give you my Basiccard and you can have a feed on it.

[1:35:55] MC: Thanks M.

[1:35:58] Woman 6: We've been hearing a lot about the blanketing of Indigenous people and as I mentioned before, I've been working with Indigenous family violent offending programs, I've been working within the justice system, in particular safe houses.

The safe houses first of all: the blanketing effect that went wrong there, was initially it was set up that the women's were known as safe houses, but the men's were known as 'cooling-off sheds', so automatically, the men are branded as being the violent offenders and every single male is that way and the women necessarily aren't. I think that was wrong. I do know that very recently that's changed but there is a stigma . . . connected to the safe houses and to men in particular - that all Indigenous men are violent offenders.

The only other comment I wanted to make is that from my experiences doing this behaviour-change work, I find that the Indigenous people, not everyone, the majority of them, are so completely out of control within their lives. The government and whomever else is controlling every single aspect of their lives. The housing, we've got up to 30 people . . . in one house, we've got no water, we've got huge costs for living, education is poor. The reality is that a lot of the people that I actually service and were violent offenders actually willingly wanted to go to prison! Now what does that say about our people and their state of mind and how they're dealing with their life at the moment? In that they want to go to prison because it's a holiday. They get a bed, they get privacy, they get food, they get education, they get everything they want in prison. Now I think that is a pretty sad fact. But it's something I'm picking up every single day. They get more in prison than in our communities.

(Applause)

[1:37:51] MC: . . . that's one of the areas we've heard a lot about, people have views on housing and what we can do in that area.

1:38.20

[1:38:11] Woman: In regards to housing (inaudible) . . . they should have hostels for young people . . . and that will assist them with the overcrowding . . . have a boarding house or whatever . . . a place where they can do homework . . . community can get involved (inaudible). So you're killing two birds with one stone.

[1:39:03] JG: Just another comment, I think there's lots of evidence of where there are safe places. I spent most of my life with mob living, and currently, in a First-Nations town where the house hasn't been locked for years. There are places where First Nations people are the main, majority, inhabitants who manage those places with their own governance structures. They feel in authority in authority because they're own land. They're often called homelands outstations. Whenever these larger towns and governments and shires and interventions take over, they really become big service centres and I hesitate to say, even like refugee camps where certainly it's someone's country. But in north eastern Arnhem, other people have really been forced there, off their own countries, really for the convenience of government. But until governments do recognise the local governance structures and allow those (structures) the Elders and the land-owners to control things, then things aren't going to get better and I think one answer is recognising sovereignty. As people have said, the people of North East Arnhem Land and I guess everywhere else, still believe and know this is their country and it's never been ceded to the Commonwealth and a treaty is . . . essential to moving forward. [1:40:31]

(Applause)

[1:40:35] MC: and just on that, I'm sure you're aware . . . (interjections). Anything else . . . housing or do you wanna talk about? It's just that housing came up so I thought it was a good segue into it but I'm happy to keep talking about safe communities . . .

[1:41:06] Man: hang on . . . housing – well, you know, I worked in the housing area for a while and I couldn't believe that SIHIP and the contractors and how that money got shared amongst the houses. A lot of the houses on small communities had to be refurbished. Certain houses were bare for a long time, but never got any repair and maintenance done on them. They were paying rent. There was a figure, say for example, of \$186 000 refurbish of a house and all of a sudden it drops down to 76,000. There was a big gap – a real big gap. Why? Funding out of that housing paid for the contractors, the workers comp, the demountables, TA, everything else that the contractors had ... their expenditure. That's a true fact.

[1:42:10] MC: Moving forward, what do you suggest?

[1:42:13] Same man: Then you had . . . ongoing training. I think . . . we trained the most people around Australia and throughout the world. We're still training but they can't get a job. Education leads to some sort of outcome of full-time employment. We only employ them with opportunities . . . see the shires come in. How many local Aboriginal people (with) good educational qualifications (from) Kormilda College, Eurara(?) and all those other places . . . opportunities there, but they're not getting a job, they get put on CDEP(?). CDEP is what, a stepping stone for accreditation, getting them ready for full-time employment of some sort? There was a guy who went down . . . from Charles Darwin University . . . to one of the communities (inaudible) near Alice(?) and they formed a little team of workers to . . . take over repair and maintenance. They all got qualified (sic) certificate IIIs, their white cards, certificate IIIs in construction and building and the shire knocked em back because they . . . business to take over repair and maintenance. What happened there . . . was that the central shire was still employing people from Alice Springs to go out and do the work. What about that? (inaudible) There's a policy way back in the 80s. The ADP(?) policy by Mick Miller, a Queensland Murri . . . they talked about education, employment, enterprises . . . there were business(?) floating around everywhere in the Territory. In Katherine, for example, we had a group of Aboriginal plant operators doing stage 1 of Tindale (air base). We had mechanics. Where are they today? We haven't got them anymore . . . and because of the contract, the tendering . . . if you got an Aboriginal company established (sic) and depends on tendering and applying for government jobs, they get left out . . . they get left out because they get (inaudible) because it's cheaper for the others. I've been sitting around here for . . . years and I tell you what mate, there's gotta be a lot more improvement . . . we've gotta empower our own people. You've got to listen. I dunno what these things on the side of the head are, are they ornaments or ears or what, I dunno. Who's listening? [1:45:04]

[1:45:09] Man 1: Just re-iterating the employment possibility, back in 1976, I applied for a loan from ADC in Adelaide and the crowning glory was, 'prove that you're Aboriginal'. I had to go down the shop for a white man to sign the piece of paper that said I am an Aboriginal yet on the football field, they knew what colour I was coz I played football.

[1:45:44] Woman 5: There's a few things, one of them is, you've got child protection out there. I'd rather like to see a family support worker in supporting families because when you say 'child protection' it's like saying every child's at risk in remote communities and that's not the case. Also about housing, one big thing I'd like to see from the Commonwealth Government and take away the housing off the NT Government which has been a huge failure. I've recently seen photographs of houses in remote . . . the Commonwealth has given the NT Government millions of dollars and it's been wasted without even one house being built. But I'm just asking, have you seen the DVD 'Our Generation'?

(Inaudible)

[1:46:37] Woman 5: I'm asking you, have you seen that DVD?

(Inaudible)

[1:46:40] Woman 5: I'm just asking you . . . I'm just asking you a simple question. Have you seen that DVD?

Mark: (inaudible, multiple voices).

[1:47:05] Woman 5: Well it's quite obvious, it's 'no' but when you actually look at that and where they've taken the shots, it shows openly, 30 people living in a house. But over here, we got the GBM all got their houses been built there (sic) they're living in very fine houses and I thought the Intervention was about the community, living in community. It was evidence-based that they built houses for their workers on that community and not address the housing issues of remote communities when you've got 30 people living in a house. That is number one risk of child abuse, when you have 30 people living in a house. And then the safe houses came in a lot later under the Intervention. They weren't even formed those safe houses, you had safe houses for children then you had safe houses for women and children.

On the other hand, when you talk about housing, I saw photographs, they are dis-gusting and if you think I wouldn't put my dog in those houses and how they've been handed back to the community. Communities have been complaining about those houses. And in the urban area of housing, there have been families living in Territory Housing for 60 years, 57 years, 37 years. Actually, I have been pushing this issue for quite a few years about purchasing those homes. My mother lived in a house in Stuart Park, high (sic) real estate, the houses in Parap, Fannie Bay, high real estate. You got families living there for 60 years renting. My mum was renting for 60 years, as well. The family wanted to purchase that property. NT Government says 'no you can't'.

There were issues around, families were so distressed by the NT Government not allowing them to purchase their properties (after) living in one house for 57 years. And also 60 years - how much have they paid for that property? When they actually asked for a price for the property from the government, something like \$800,000 and there's no negotiation.

My mother's house - \$760,000. After renting for 60 years, one house for 37. It's a beautiful property. I pushed it right through to Macklin and Gillard just recently, just come on the ground. I even sent an email to Trish Crossin but didn't get a response. We're in the situation where the family's got to move out of its home. I think we've got some form of ownership, sovereignty rights or something after living there for 25 years.

And, uhm, how do you get people out of poverty? When you have ownership to assets. That's when they keep pouring their money into a home. And when you can't get your home, you don't close that gap. They're saying housing's not part of closing the gap. Well I think housing is a big issue. But even housing comes hand in hand with child protection and that's not even there, they're so far apart. We're sick to death of hearing, 'that's the NT Government's responsibility'. Nuh! NT Government says, 'that's the Commonwealth responsibility.' It's about the two governments getting together and forming good partnerships and how do you do that with communities? You do it with consultation, listening and forming partnerships.

(Applause)

[1:50:33] Woman 6: . . . been mentioning the 'Our Generation DVD' one thing it makes very very clear

is that . . . for remote communities to get any sort of substantial assistance from the government . . . the only way they're able to do that is by signing over leases, these 99-year leases for their land etc. It's blackmail and I don't think anybody should be held to ransom for that (interjections) but we also know, too, that, and I don't think anyone has mentioned it here at all today, that the government's answer to the problems within the Northern Territory was the 20 growth towns. The communities are going to be wiped out. So I'd like to ask, where is the consultation, where is the respect for those people and for their way of life even just to live in their own backyard and not have to worry about anything else? You're bringing in mainstream everything, everywhere.

[1:51.48] Woman 5: One of the things I'd like to raise is the fact that the Commonwealth Government came down to remote communities and asked them about purchasing their house. That was the most flawed program put out to Aboriginal people. They got a house (sic) but they don't own the land. If you wanna buy a house it's all broken down . . . even after 30 years in that home, the government can just take it back for a dollar. You came down with this initiative in remote communities, but the NT government says, 'no you can't purchase your property even though you've been living there for 60 years'. It was absolutely flawed and taken advantage of Aboriginal people.

[1:52.46] MC: Just to clarify that, the government is consulting in all the communities not just the growth towns, and government has never said when it is going to leave those other communities. The other thing is that government have stated that they will no longer do any compulsory leasing. After the five-year leasing expires government are committed to not extending those leases on a compulsory measure. There are negotiations around various types of leasing, as there has been for some time to secure assets over township leases. But there won't be any compulsory leases.

[1:53.32] Woman 6: [inaudible] you are not allowing communities... you are blanketing... once again trying to make communities in the NT mainstream like the rest of them and it's very detrimental.

[1:53.43] AW: I'd like to explain what we've just handed around . This is an alternative developed over the last four years by the Prescribed Area People's Alliance. It's where delegates and elders have come together from communities around the Northern Territory and prescribed areas, and have created an 11-point plan and alternative that they want to see put in place. So I'll just pass that around. Cos I think it's a really good skeleton for us to take forward now.

[1:54.17] MC: I'll certainly pass that on.

[1:54.26] MR: Just on that, I would like you and somehow Senator Trish Crossin, if you can organise it , a summit with all the law men and law women to meet in Darwin and Alice Springs because a lot of our rights have been eroded and that would get you consultation with the real leaders. Okeydoke? That's one.

Second point you just mentioned was leasing. I like it to be said here now, that a lot of the growth towns in the community leasings is paid by ABA. ABA is the royalty money paid by the land council, particularly Illuowaka(?) It goes into a kitty, section 64(4) plus some others which also does the full land councils, because the government has discretionary powers, in other words kleptomaniac powers.

Brough did it with 180,000 to run his festival in his electorate and now the same thing with this minister. So that means all of Australia thinks that the Commonwealth Government, through taxes, are paying for the leases. We're paying for our own, because all the money that's generated comes off our lands! That makes everybody in this country have a good lifestyle. Yet, the Commonwealth Government chooses to treat our people as second-class citizens. The Government also treats all of you people here, whitefellas, as second-class citizens, not recognising us a state.

[1:56.10] MC: I continue to hear a lot about the issues and that's fine but we're really interested in hearing about what we do to move forward, and there's been some ideas, that's been great. But I'd just like to encourage people to . . . give us some more ideas about moving forward.

[1:56.26] Man: I'd just like to make a comment on behalf of my wife who comes from the community of Numbullwah(?) which is in south east Arnhem and actually Jenny Macklin flew over there the other day, But I don't think she saw Numbullwar(?), she was on her way to Nukurr (?).

Nothing has happened yet with the housing project, the SIHIP. And my wife would like to know if the housing projects are foreseen to go beyond June next year because absolutely nothing has happened at Numbullwah(?). It was a growth town, there was a promise about two years ago of 40 houses and people haven't seen anything yet. It's a little bit of a forgotten area midway between Groote Island and Nukurr. It's in the Roper Gulf shire to which the shire offices are in Katherine, outside the shire, so they don't really see much of what happens out there.

People out there have a government business manager, his place is actually built in a cyclone surge area, so far he's been lucky. He's got his place but nothing else has happened. So my comment would be, if the housing projects can continue past June next year, because it is certainly needed in many communities because it's certainly needed in many other communities where nothing has happened (inaudible).

[1:57:54] MC: I'll just say that the housing program, the national partnership agreement on remote Indigenous housing is not tied to the NTEW, it's an ongoing project. It will continue. In relation to your specific question, M(?) can follow it up and we'll talk to you about that. We're probably going over-time, are you happy to keep going or do you want to talk about other topics? (inaudible). Health?

[1:58.25] Same man: Just before we finish with that five-year lease: (inaudible) . . . and talking to other people, we found out that the five-year lease that was agreed by the government called themselves the land council. Now land councils are getting the money for the five-year lease because the commonwealth are the landlords. They hold the land and the houses and the assets, the commonwealth, and the people out there said 'how come the land council are getting the money? Shouldn't the money be coming to us so we can make a decision on that money and how it can be used?'

When we look at building another house or two, because they haven't been told what the decision(?) is. Now that was five years . How much money is really going in to that community and all the land councils (inaudible) . . . and bank and interest. People out there, and old people old people's place. Build old people's place (sic). Build flats for the young mothers. Build flats for the young men. When they look at the land council reps they don't know anything about it. So . . . call themselves a land council, I don't know why . could be (inaudible) why not consult properly with the people?

These people came up with an idea of how that money can be spent and put back into the communities to solve some of the overcrowding or building (inaudible) an extra house or accommodation for young

people and old people.

[2:00:16] MC: I'm happy to talk to you afterwards about why that is there but there is a statutory responsibility of the land council on behalf of traditional owners to receive that money once the Commonwealth's passed that over. There's ongoing discussion but I'll talk to you about it afterwards. But the Commonwealth's passed that money onto land councils, and it's up to them to pass it onto traditional owners.

There were some other topics we hoping to cover. Health was one of them. There's a number of questions up here that have been posed and we'd be intersted in people's views on some of the health issues out there and moving forward . . . how we can do better to improve health.

[2:01:05] Woman (largely inaudible-can't identify): can I just ask a question (inaudible) As far as Indigenous communities are concerned the fruther or more remote... then the healthier they actually are... taking that into consideration . . . don't bring the grog in . . . and sugar and all of that so, given those . . .

[2:01:46] MC: I'm not here to answer questions. But are you saying to me that the health and well-being of people is better in outstations and homelands (interjection) . . . certainly government will take that into account (voices).

[2:02:04] MR : Health. Okeydoke. Our people have to pay for dialysis machines. There's not another race in this country that does. The Kintore ladies. We also put submissions into ABA that . . . between Lajamanu and Kalkarindji. Another issue that N(?) was just talking about was the outstations. A lot of our people wanna go back to our own areas, my mob iincluded. But there's only 10 milion, or 20 million by the federal government and Northern Territory Government and they will not use existing distant programs.

We know the problems within, but we want to be able to teach our children culture in our homelands. Every part of Australia is our homeland but within our clans and tribes we have specific areas we have to look after and keep our children safe.

These growth towns do not look after small towns, they're concentrating on big towns. What about the rest of us?. We get nothing. Like I said the GBM, the ginger bread men, they get their houses instantly built within two-weeks. Police stations, same thing.

What I'm saying again, the word consultation: sit down with those law men and women. That's what I'm telling you as a person who lives in a remote community as a leader. Sit down with us. Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

Before you put this no-longer a green paper, no longer a draft, which has got to go through the two Micky Mouse outfits, the House of Reps and the Senate, as a Bill. Sit down with us, because we can give you the answers with people who work within this system and see what comes out of it. You'll be quite surprised, you might have the answers to what you're saying.

[2:04:07]MC: OK thanks M, we've heard that a couple of times . I see a number of people who are leaving. Do we want to continue on? I'm happy to keep going until eight o'clock, more than happy to do that.

'(Inaudible question). There will be a feedback process out of all of this, when and how it's going to be done and we'll determine in the future, but there will be a feed-back process.

[2:04:46] Woman 8: Can I just say, you keep coming up with the word we want, 'solutions', and move on in the future. The only way we're going to get solutions and move out into the future is to meet with people that are affected already, out in communities, as M is saying, you need meet with the Elders, the law people and that's what they been asking for. Not the middle man, but talk to the people who are out there. We come up with all the solutions and ideas, however, it's the people who are affected out there on the ground. They're the ones that should be sitting round the table as parties talking about solutions ... and how to move forward.

[2:05:33] MC: . . . and we're doing that.

[2:05:35] woman 8: yeah but bring them together, the law people ... the old people that have been down south . . . tell them what it's like under the Intervention what are they (inaudible).

[2:05:51] MC: You know what I've seen? I've been out to the communities, I've seen . . .

[2:05:54] Woman 8: Nah nah nah, you've been out communities but I'm saying all the law people. Talk to people like Djiniyini Gondarra, Rosalie Kunoth-Monks, George Pascoe, who's the other one, I can't think ... Harry Nelson. Bring them together.

[2:06:14] MC: Yep, and I've been at meetings with the minister with some of those people. there is a number of consultations happening right across the board. I'm happy to look at others, like M's suggested...

[2:06:24] Woman 8: . . . M's probably part of that group.

[2:06:31] R: further to that mate, how then is it that all we ever read about and hear about is that income management is universally loved? Jenny Macklin says is that everyone loves income management and dah dah dah . . . why is that so many people like income management, when I know for a fact that it's highly unpopular. So why are we, are we getting all this? Is it just spin? Why? If you're consulting properly, why are you only hearing one voice?

[2:07:13]MC: As I've said, whatever people bring up, like income management, like a number issues that have been brought up, we'll note them down and get back to government so we don't hear selectively, we hear what's said to us (interjections) and we feed that back through the government (interjections). I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna have a debate about particular...(interjections)You know, we're listening to what you're saying recording it and it gets back to government.

[2:07:46] R: I'm sorry, that's duck-speak, that's Orwellian duck-speak that your guilty of and this is the problem, this is the damn problem and people like you and the government and the politicians, like M's been alluding to, and everybody else in here, your quacking at us like a duck and Senator Trish Crossin... (interjections).

[2:08:14] MC: So were the any other initiatives or ideas people had around health? We're not expecting people to come up with a you-beaut solution, but people might have an idea about what's working in their areas or in their communities that can be pointed towards.

[2:08:36] MR: The average age of Aboriginal men is 49. But the thing is, you know how non-Indigenous men and women look forward to superannuation. Why can't the government lower it down? (inaudible) . . . men and women . . . and allow us to live our lives. We don't get superannuation. (Inaudible) . . . health side of things . Snowdon said the other week they've given another vehicle for health. I don't see it a dentist for six months. This is what we need. A lot of our communities are not absolutely romantic,

they want to go to the islands or somewhere else instead of coming to the deserts, where it's beautiful, too, you know.

Teachers, we can't keep em. We can't keep nurses. We can't keep the police. And our mob always stay there because they got nowhere to go. Economic base, that's what we want, we're involved in the cattle industry, we're involved in a lot of stuff in the Northern Territory . . . the mining, Fortescue Metals . . . given their mob only four million. Where's the rationale in this? It's their land and it's making people very rich.

We need to equalise everything, the economics in this country, we have to share in it. We're not. Not for me, but for the children to come. It's really sad we're being run by a lot of idiots, you have no idea except self-interest, greed, corruption.

I'd look at it very seriously (inaudible) and particularly when you go back to government and tell them to listen to what N's(?) saying about leaders. Come out, don't just listen to people who live here our work for your guys. Look at what consultation really means. Consultation when I talk to my people is about talking .

There's no respect, we can't punish our children who don't go to school. We can't touch them. They say, 'if you touch me, I'll go to the police.' A lot of parents, cos I'm head of my school council, some of them are afraid to hug their children, because they'll be called paedophiles. We love our children like everybody else. The children are our future. We don't do these accusations that have been put up in front of use. It's the worst thing I've seen from any government, political party , it's an indictment on all those political parties and all those politicians (inaudible).

[2:12:00] MC: We've heard a number of those things but as I say we're interested in any ideas.

[2:12:19] Woman: Talking about ideas, and things that worked well in the past... This is going back a bit, but women's centres. We had women's centres in all our communities and they worked very well. Your health issues and your school attendance, your community involvement, safety, everything came through the women's centres. And it seems to be programs that work that funding ceases. So once we prove that they work , they cut it out. So the women who remember how well they operate and how well-functioning they were . . . we had no nutrition problems there (inaudible).

[2:13:00] EM: On health: I work for an organisation that delivers health education in language for people and we spend years and years and years developing ways to talk about, not patronising things like, 'make sure you wash your hands', and 'eat healthy food', (inaudible) but microbiology, anatomy, biomedical theories of disease(?). The fundamental things that people need to be convinced of before they then change those behaviours.

Everybody talks about the fact that this kind of of high-level education delivery of language is very unique. Why doesn't the government look towards the future where that's not unique, where their human right to access information about health and economics and the things that affect our lives in our own language is a given and I . . . know it's not government policy but, attacking bilingual education is not investing in a future where we have some linguistic skills to communicate these really key concepts in the languages that people understand, but let's look forward to a future- lets invest, and fund. and resource a future - where that health education is not the simplistic signs [pictures] in clinics saying '*here's healthy food to eat*' when it's not affordable or it's not accessible and nobody's taught them how to cook it. But actual conceptual adult education, high level education in language is something that every community can assume it will have have access to rather than something's that seen as quite

unique in Australia. I think that's a fairly concrete thing that the government could think about.

Applause

[2:14:45] MC: Some of the health issues are obviously related to diet and through the NTER, community for licensing was one of those legislated measures that was brought in. There's a few questions up there about how it works, how it was brought in. . . .

SECOND RECORDING

1.01 MC: ...views on the licensing regime. Should they be strengthened? Should it continue? Some of those sorts of questions. People have any thoughts on that?

00.06 Woman?: I don't know a huge amount about what funding goes into community stores but if there isn't any or if there is minimal then there should be more. I'm just thinking, like the Queensland Government offers a subsidy for fuel and that's kept their prices down compared to the rest of the country. Why on earth wouldn't you invest in something that's so important like good food? I mean I've been to those community stores they are so expensive it's absolutely prohibitive. I understand the reason is because there's no competition, so you're looking at more stores so that they compete with each other or they need to be, they need funding so that the prices can be kept down and made affordable and the more expensive food should be the bad food

00.50 MR: Inaudible first sentence. I live in a community that's got one community store OK ?And the prices are 180 to 280 % mark up price, fuel the same. Some of our people can't leave for weeks, right. As the lady just said people get subsidised in another state, we don't get it here. That's what it is. Some of the storekeepers in the past now live on the East Coast at Surfers Paradise. My people are still there. A loaf of bread \$5-\$6, fuel astronomical, conditions of roads - but again, you know, we've got to live there. There's no competition. You got Woolworths here you got umpteen stores

01.50 PR: I mean, you know, it's, road funding would also actually help with all this as well by actually making the roads a bit better you could actually integrate this stuff with some works

programs that provide employment for Aboriginal people to do the road works, to build the housing, to do, you know, to do all that sort of stuff.

It's not as easy as just saying I know, there's a great deal of training and all that sort of stuff that needs to go along with it. But a commitment to improving conditions of roads and a commitment to employing more Aboriginal people or Aboriginal people in Aboriginal stores, a commitment to subsidising healthy food so that an orange is cheaper than a Mars Bar. You know these are the things that could actually make a long distance thing that could actually make these things a lot better and I think that that's probably one of the things.

It has to be said a lot of these stores do do some of these things off their own bat like some of them do deliberately mark up the price of some things so that healthy food is cheaper. Some of them do work quite strongly with community and employ local people. A lot of them do that sort of stuff but more but more federal help to make this the standard rather than the stand out I suppose would be one way this could actually happen.

02.52 Woman: Less money spent on bureaucracy and more money sent into the community

02.59. Man: Err i don't know who owns the licence for the stores the community or...?

03.00 MC: Whoever manages the store applies for a licence and the licence is issued by FAHCSIA

03.13 Same Man: OK, what about encouraging the people to grow a lot of their own food?

Vegies, fruit, market you know fruit markets and that, vegie markets. The soil is so rich especially around Central Australia and we have a lot of rain, a lot of water round the Top End way. Why not encourage and invest like we've got at Ali Curung, that's got the watermelons, watermelons and things like that so why can't that sort of thing be encouraged to people up here in the Top End and other places? You know growing your own vegies is quite easy, I mean there's a lot of work put into you know the soil, fertiliser but this, that could benefit the whole community – employment, talk

about training and everything else before, education, education must lead somewhere.

04.07 MC: OK thanks

04.08 Woman: Just touching on these two points um this gentleman suggested a kibbutz style sort of situation. I lived on a kibbutz for a year and it was a melon farm so that basically their main resource was melons so they grew them. Half the community would go out, would go out and work with the melons the other half of the community would go out into to the nearby town and do other sorts of things and the result was that this community had its own vibrant economic structure, that basically meant it could fund itself through the growing and the selling of the melons and they had to start at the absolute bottom and build up and did it over sort of 50 years and it's a really good model and there's still quite a few kibbutzim in Israel that exist um that would be – assuming there was the money to start with to put the money into there after a certain amount of time. They really would be quite sufficient.

Can I just say something else? What that gentleman said about the roads just reminded me of something I saw today, reading a coronial inquest from a couple of years ago. I can't remember what it was out of Alice or out of Groote, but it was four young people died in a roll over in a car and one of the recommendations by the coroner wasn't to fix the road and the reason given was that it's not a very often travelled road and therefore it wasn't worth the money spent.

Never mind the fact that four people died, they weren't drunk, there was nothing wrong with the car it was

the fact that the roads and they were young so they had an inexperienced driver, but the fact was that the road massively contributed to it and it was determined not to do anything about that and even if and that was, I don't remember the population of the community but it was relatively small and so it was determined that it was only these people using that road so that doesn't matter all. I think when I read that was it's just so racist. I mean, four people died in one accident and that's not

worth spending a bit of money to fix that road.

06.05 MC: Roads have come up in some of the consultations

06.10 MR inaudible first sentence: ... about market gardens I'll just finish off a bit on that. At

Ali Curung there are water melons, right and they sell em to Woolworths. They've also now through

ABA [Aboriginal Benefits Account] somebody up top here plays god. The Minister doesn't allow some of these submissions to go

in masses of pomegranates being sold being put together, going to be sold to America they'll sell it back here. Twenty years time they'll get it. The centre farm outside of Ti-Tree, but when you put these submissions up this person, who lives in isolation and got advisors that know nothing about Aboriginal people about these things about food which is essential. Market gardens which can supply the community and the school. Don't listen. Tell that to her too (not sure if this last sentence was said by someone else)

07.03 MC: So you're saying (background cries of "you don't listen" and "listen") that support market gardens and local produce and fruit and veg (cries of "yes, yes" and "economics") Yes

Woman: You've got to let go of controlling the money

R: The reason why I said don't jail Indigenous people, don't throw them in prison is, if you guys don't, if the Government don't take umm positive steps in addressing this issue then Islam will take over and if you think you've got dramas now with the Indigenous people umm you'll have bigger dramas when they go in jail with the name Peter and come out with the name Abdul. You're going to have (inaudible)

08.03 MC: All right. Look we've been going on for quite some time now umm we've covered, the next topic was housing which I think we've covered pretty well and then the final one is around ...

08.23 Man: We need an enquiry into the SIHIP program

08.24 Woman: Yes I support that take it away from the NT Government

Background many voices in support

08.26 MC: Yes we've heard that

Woman: You know when you've got good housing you've got good health. They come hand in hand together

MC: Yes, we've heard that a few times. Now governance we've sort of touched on this I think without actually naming it

Woman: You took it away from the community. You've put shires, councils in place to take control of the affairs

08.56 MC: So ok, what are you saying about that?

09.00 same woman: Hand it back to the community, the leadership. They need to take control of their affairs. It's their business let 'em take control. The NT Government put the shires in place to take control overall. I think that's completely disempowered the leaders in those remote communities. (inaudible)

And there's where we're at today. You know the Government's got to realise there's been many, many, many years of neglect that we're at a point now where you just can't even turn it back and you're still making errors when it comes to children, because when that

human being (inaudible word) these children have got trauma they've been living it. We're dealing with adults now with alcohol problems. You're going to have the same situation with children.

You need to put the responsibilities back into the remote communities and to the leadership.

You know, example, Tiwi Island - eighty services fly into the Tiwi Islands to service the Tiwi Islands, EIGHTY. How much money that spent? Every aircraft flying in two days out again. That's not a way to service communities. They're not creating real jobs in there for the people to take control of their own affairs and that hasn't happened.

You know when justice will be done is when we see a black leader. That's at the Commonwealth and the State Government. That's when true justice will be done for Aboriginal people. When do we ever, we have never in the Commonwealth Government seen a black Aboriginal Affairs Minister sadly they've still got these non-Aboriginal people, still managing and telling us what to do. Now I'm asking to you again today and I'm asking to you the

same question (Woman in the background "Don't ask him") or the group here: has Aboriginal people been involved in this consultation that you're putting up on board today?

10.53 MC.\: yes that's...

Same woman interrupting him: It doesn't look like it. You're not even presenting so you know it's about culturally appropriate to Aboriginal People, presentation everything. You're just, you're just still far away from it all (woman in the background "engage with the community")

MC: Trying to say something

Woman interrupting again: You're still far away from it all and it's really frustrating for us. We struggle really hard in programs, in services and Government pulls away programs. You just come in with a blanket right across this territory. They didn't give a damn about communities working well or that one over here. That's why the Maningrida tried to take it to the High Court on the intervention.

CDEP was working excellent. You just destroyed it and they had economics building in some of these communities. Like someone said today there was a lot of communities that were dry communities. You just came in with a complete blanket, no consultation, you didn't engage with one black fella to do that. And now you're sitting here wanting us to give you solutions. Come on, it's a bit late mate.

And another thing I'd like to say is that I really think your being inappropriate today in how you are presenting and it's no offence. It's, you know, you should just listen but you're trying to defend . I'm sorry but that's, you know, a few people have said that today.

12.09 Man: (inaudible)

Woman: I don't know where your preferences go M, anyway thank you very much.

MC: Thanks for your views

MR: On the government. When Government's elected whichever one it is they say we are there for all of you which is wrong and they pray for it , pray for a god. Up here governance- what is it really? Our future is bleak and I was president of my community. Shires come in and took it over. They took all the assets and Gough Whitlam gave soil to my grandfather. You know what's happened in 45 years? Nothing. Gone backwards. We don't have any land we don't have economic base and we certainly don't have a future. The only future is like they do with taxes, taxes and death. I can't guarantee any of my kids through education a job at the end of the tunnel, yet I hear people saying yes there is. There are NO jobs in remote communities. You might have it at Arnhem Land where there's a mine. We got cattle industry. We need an injection of dollars but what we need back is empowerment to our people, that's your key otherwise something's going to come round the corner that this country's never had. You had it at Ballarat, you know where that is, don't you?

14.03 MC: All right

14.04 MR: It's revolution, son

14.06 MC: All right umm that really brings to the end the topics that umm we wanted to discuss. Some people do ask what happens next and, I think I've sort of said that a few times, all this information will be collated, will be fed back through into the process along with the consultations elsewhere in the community in other major centres, with key stakeholders that will all get fed into the Government so that the policy makers and the Government can make decisions about what happens next at the end of the NTER.

That's all from me did anyone want to say anything else or have any other ideas Just before we ...

EM: Can I say something about the process?

MC: Yes

EM: Once it's all been fed in and the policy makers come up with their proposals, is that proposal going to be brought back for a second round of consultations, so the people can say "yes, you heard us. That's what we want or no, you made a mistake before it goes into law?" 'Cos what's happened in the past is these consultations have happened, then something's become law and everybody's said that they didn't listen to us. So are you going to come back and let those people whose lives it's going to affect say it's OK before it becomes law?

15.25 MC: Yeah, as I say there will be a feedback process of some sort. I can't answer that because I don't know exactly how it's going to work and when, but we'll certainly note that down that that's what someone brought up here and that should occur and we'll feed that in.

R: The Northern Territory Government is going to spend \$300m building a new jail. A

percentage of that money should be, should go to the kibbutz like I was saying and that would be able to (inaudible) all the answers to the Government. It would minimise all the problems if they set aside a few hectares of land and the jobs, the training and everything can be generated from that land and you can build a university or hospital and future leaders of Indigenous communities.

16.25. MC: All right, well thanks very much we now conclude the meeting thanks.