

Friday 1st May 2015

All Australians should be shocked at Aboriginal community closures

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights advocacy organisation ANTaR today joined the rallies to add its voice to the shocking prospect of forced remote Aboriginal community closures in WA.

National Director Andrew Meehan said that when governments don't listen to reasonable requests for decency, its time to show government what the community thinks.

"ANTaR will stand in solidarity with the remote Aboriginal communities in Western Australia and join the many people expected at today's peaceful rallies. This is an issue all Australians should be concerned about, and one that we're encouraging our supporters to act on," Mr Meehan said.

"Frankly, no other community in the country would expect to have funding for municipal and essential services withdrawn and have the prospect of being shut down hang over its head," he said.

Mr Meehan noted that there was a real concern that a range of human rights are being breached, particularly as the closures are targeted only at Aboriginal communities.

"The forced closure of Aboriginal communities, without the free, prior and informed consent of those communities, will directly and indirectly impact on a spectrum of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in international instruments which Australia has voluntarily signed up to," he said.

He also noted that, as a signatory, all Australian governments are obliged to uphold these rights, without discrimination.

"Its time for the Federal and Western Australian governments to forge a new agreement that ensures the ongoing funding of these services to all Aboriginal communities in Western Australia and work in partnership with Aboriginal people in those communities on supporting future aspirations of community members." he said.

We encourage our supporters to join the rallies, and write a letter to the Federal Minister, WA Premier and relevant WA Ministers by going to the ANTaR website:

<https://antar.org.au/campaigns/wa-community-closures>

ANTaR is the only non-Indigenous organisation dedicated solely to supporting the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and working to educate the wider community, shape public opinion, and speak up for justice, rights and respect for Australia's First Peoples.

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