

## INTRODUCTION

This issue of *Ngilya* focuses on what is arguably the most pressing human rights issue in Australia today - the Northern Territory Intervention, also known as the Northern Territory Emergency Response. Since its inception in 2007, Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory have been subjected to racially discriminatory measures that include income management, the compulsory acquisition of their lands and the imposition of Government Business Managers. The Gillard Government remains firmly committed to maintaining the spirit and intent of these measures with its 'Stronger Futures' reforms.

In this issue of *Ngilya* you will read articles by three authors who describe, in very different ways, how the Intervention has denied Aboriginal people their human rights. Thalia Anthony begins with the long history of exploitation of Aboriginal workers in the Northern pastoral industry. Until the latter part of the twentieth century the meager wages of Aboriginal workers were often managed by government appointed protectors, on the basis of the belief that Aboriginal wards were incapable of managing their own money. Thalia Anthony then compares such arguments to the rationale behind contemporary income management policies. The result is a series of disturbing parallels and a call for self-determination to become the foundation of Indigenous policy.

Alison Vivian critiques the Commonwealth's claim that Aboriginal policy is evidence-based. She refers to international evidence which suggests that effective Aboriginal governance systems are crucial for the achievement of improved outcomes. This is counter to approaches that underpin the Intervention, which usurp the autonomy of Aboriginal communities.

Finally, Paddy Gibson shares his insights gained from working with Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. His interviews with community leaders reveal the harsh consequences of policies that take away independence and innovation at the grass roots. However, as the interviews reveal, there is also incredible resilience and resistance against policies that are all too similar to those in place during the 'ration days'.

On behalf of the Jumbunna Research Unit, I thank you for your continuing support of our publications. I hope that you find the work of these three authors to be informative and thought provoking.

Nicole Watson  
Editor