



m e d i a r e l e a s e

PM's response beset with problems

Australia's peak Aboriginal health body, NACCHO, has slammed the Federal Government's response to the report into child sexual abuse in the NT saying the Prime Minister has utterly failed to consult with Aboriginal people to seek solutions.

NACCHO CEO, Dea Delaney Thiele, says Mr Howard's "knee-jerk response" would create more problems than it solved as it failed to consider the wishes and aspirations of Aboriginal people in the NT. Any hope of a 'partnership' with Aboriginal people was now impossible.

"There's no doubt that there are problems with grog and sexual abuse in some Aboriginal communities—and throughout non-Aboriginal Australia too!—but the Prime Minister's ill-considered response fails to empower Aboriginal people to tackle the problems ourselves," Ms Delaney Thiele says.

"The Anderson/Wild report makes a special focus on the social determinants of health—education, housing, jobs, training, health promotion, poverty—yet the Federal Government has consistently and repeatedly failed to adequately resource these areas to lift Aboriginal people out of poverty, despair and addiction."

Ms Delaney Thiele said the Federal Government's proposed acquisition and control of 60 NT communities was a grave undermining of the NT Government and, more importantly, of the United Nations' *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* which mandates that Aboriginal people have the right to "design, deliver and control services" to their own communities.

"Furthermore, a ban on alcohol in Aboriginal communities will merely provoke a mass migration of drinkers to bigger towns like Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine, where there already are existing social problems resulting from alcohol abuse," she says.

"Before the Federal Government starts waving around a big stick, in true paternalistic fashion, it would do well to talk to Aboriginal people to consult about solving the problems and moving forward in harmony."

Interviews/information:
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