

Friday 1 May 2015

Unions urge Abbott and Barnett Governments to stop the funding cuts and closures of Aboriginal communities

Unions are calling on the Abbott and Barnett Governments to reinstate funding for Aboriginal services, and end the forcible closures of Aboriginal communities in Western Australia.

The ACTU leadership has written to the Prime Minister to stop de-funding Indigenous programs, and the Premier to reverse his decision to potentially close up to 150 Aboriginal communities.

The Abbott Government has cut \$534 million to Indigenous services and replaced funding with a new Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) grants scheme.

However one third of the \$860 million IAS funding has been awarded to Indigenous providers, resulting in significant cuts to Indigenous organisations in favour of non-Indigenous service providers.

The ACTU strongly believes in the right to self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Both governments must genuinely engage and consult with Aboriginal people.

Unions have endorsed today's National Day of Action and will join the community to attend the rallies across the country.

The union movement has a proud history of standing alongside with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in the struggle for civil rights, and remains committed to the values of self-determination, equality and fairness for all Australians.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

"The union movement supports, and will defend, the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to live on traditional lands and continue their cultural connection which is an invaluable part of Australia's identity as a nation.

"Indigenous Australians must be consulted and involved in decision making rather than the paternalistic approach of the Abbott and Barnett Governments.

"The Abbott Government can close the gap if they empower Indigenous communities to self-determine the policies and programs which benefit their communities.

"The Indigenous Advancement Strategy funding process needs to prioritise successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations so they can service their communities."

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