

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
37TH SESSION OF THE UPR WORKING GROUP
AUSTRALIA'S 3RD UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW
25 JANUARY 2021

ABORIGINAL INTERVENTION: AS PART OF THE AUSTRALIAN NGO COALITION

Intervention delivered by Cathryn Eatock, on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples' Organization-Australia

Thank-you President and state dignitaries. I'm Cathryn Eatock, a Gayiri/Badtjula woman and Co-Chair of the Indigenous Peoples' Organisation of Australia.

Aboriginal justice and human rights concerns have deteriorated since the last UPR. This failure is directly tied to a lack of Aboriginal decision making and racist policy approaches. The Stronger Futures, Cashless Debit Card and Community Development Program all target Aboriginal people, limit access to welfare payments and disproportionately enact fines, causing hunger and entrenching disempowerment.

While the failure to provide housing, adequate sewage, electricity and water in remote regions is used to pressure Aboriginal people off from their traditional lands.

The destruction of the 46,000-year-old Juukan Gorge by Rio Tinto, highlights the abject failure of Aboriginal cultural heritage protection laws and Native Title. Native Title privileges mining, denies Aboriginal people 'free, prior and informed consent', contravenes the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Aboriginal consultations in 2017 on Constitutional Recognition resoundingly rejected symbolic change, instead calling for an elected representative 'Voice' to Parliament and a treaty developed through a Makarrata, Truth and Justice Commission, to enact real decision making and self-determination. I encourage you to refer to the NGO Report and Aboriginal Factsheet for our recommendations.

Thank you.

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