

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## GOVERNMENT'S COERCIVE APPROACH TO INDIGENOUS REFORM DISCRIMINATORY AND UNSUSTAINABLE

The Government's coercive approach to welfare and service delivery reform for Indigenous communities will usher in a renewed era of racially discriminatory treatment of Indigenous peoples, Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) said today.

"Indigenous people do not need further punishment, they need support", ANTaR National President Phil Glendenning said today.

"The Government still fails to see that unless change comes from Indigenous people themselves and solutions are 'owned' by Indigenous communities, outcomes will be piecemeal and unsustainable.

"Indigenous Australians already face the harshest of penalties for being Indigenous – a 20 year gap in life expectancy – that other Australians would not for one moment tolerate for their own families and communities.

"The fact remains that many of the problems in Indigenous communities stem from long term under-funding of services and infrastructure and a culture of neglect by governments and mainstream departments. Indigenous Australia is littered with examples of positive initiatives by Indigenous communities which have failed to be supported or resourced by government.

"The Government continues to turn attention away from its own failures and shift blame onto Indigenous people by simplistically conflating Indigenous disadvantage with passive welfare.

"Passive welfare is a symptom of broader failure, not a root cause. Empowerment, not coercive social engineering is required to fix the urgent problems facing Indigenous communities.

"Until the Government is prepared to empower Indigenous communities to take responsibility for their own futures and to provide adequate resources based on need, the situation for Indigenous Australians is unlikely to improve", Mr Glendenning concluded.

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