



THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

NORTHERN SYNOD

2011 Northern Synod Intervention Statement

Each year since the Intervention commenced in 2007, the Northern Synod has made a statement about the NT Intervention. As the Intervention is still impacting the lives of many of our members in the Northern Territory, it is necessary to make a further statement.

While the Federal Government has partly acted in response to previous concerns about; compulsory income management, suspension of the *Racial Discrimination Act*, the offensive signs at Prescribed Area boundaries which may now be removed, our major concern about a working relationship in partnership continues to be ignored.

Hence In 2011, Synod resolved that a letter be sent to the Minister responsible for the Intervention, Minister Macklin, advising that:

1. Commonwealth Government acknowledgement that the Intervention needs to be 'examined' is welcomed, as is the further opportunity to comment on what should happen next;
2. The view that 'we must work in partnership' is also welcomed as this has not been the approach used since the Intervention began;
3. Our Synod has great concerns about the process to be used, that is the 'consultations' to be held from late June to mid August 2011, as this is an unrealistic timeframe. We also have great concerns about the process of these consultations, where there is minimal time for another fly in/fly out visit to major communities, which sees bureaucrats collecting a series of ideas they do not understand and taking these back to Canberra to design Intervention Mark 2;
4. While we will make some specific suggestions as requested, in the *Stronger Futures* Discussion Paper, our major concern now, as it has been every year since 2007 is: stop telling us and doing things to us and start to work alongside us in partnership. This will involve a resetting of the government-Indigenous relationship and for government to start to use different approaches;
5. The World Council of Churches Living Letters visit, as well as the recent visit by the UN Human Rights Commissioner, continues to show the Intervention is mostly wrong and needs substantial change;
6. For how much longer do we need to tell our story?