

YOTHU YINDI FOUNDATION



Garma

31 July – 3 August 2019

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30 August, 2019

Indigenous Evaluation Strategy
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2, Collins St East
Melbourne VIC 8003

Attention: Commissioner Romlie Mokak

Dear Sir,

Please find attached the Yothu Yindi Foundation's (YYF) submission to the Productivity Commissions Inquiry - Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.

It is our view that the system in the Northern Territory is close to breaking point and is likely to have already reached a point of no return.

The system in the Territory is so out of order that it has turned in upon itself such that the low socio-economic conditions of remote Aboriginal Australia have become the means by which the system maintains itself – the higher the disadvantage, the higher the payments to agencies.

Our submission provides a series of recommendations aimed at root and branch reform of this current system that now commodifies the disadvantage of Aboriginal people in favour of government, its agencies and service providers.

Four Recommendations are made that will start an overdue process of reform and we urge the Productivity Commission not to window dress the failures by coming up with a report that allows people to feel that there is oversight and evaluation when there is not. We urge the Productivity Commission to be bold in its report.

Of importance is our submission that the Northern Territory is a special case where poverty in remote areas has become entrenched and special measures are required to break the cycle.

YYF's perspective comes from remote Northern Australia, and we seek to speak particularly for the Aboriginal people who live in North East Arnhem Land - however the work we have done in analyzing the system we believe is relevant to all of the remote and regional regions of the Territory and to the people who live in those places, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

Fixing this broken system is also essential to the future of the Northern Territory as a whole. At some point the disadvantage in the remote areas will overwhelm the administrative centers of Darwin and Alice Springs and, already, that poverty is preventing productive development of the people and economies of those regions.

It is an extraordinary situation we face where First Australians are subjected to a system that they cannot control and which impoverishes them whilst enriching those that administer their poverty. We firmly believe that given the right environment Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory will thrive as they develop their lands and waters, creating opportunity, wealth and employment but immediate reform is required if that is to happen.

Yours sincerely

Denise Bowden
Chief Executive Officer