



POLICY

A FAIR GO FOR ALL

18. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER - REALISING RIGHTS: CHANGING THE FRAME

1. For 100's of years, since the colonisation of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have had their lives controlled by failed government policy.
2. This series of failed policies have left many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in conditions of despair and entrenched poverty that is unforgivable in a first world country.
3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel abandoned by their governments as decisions are made which prioritise the interests of big business and the paternalistic ideas of a few over the interests of their families and communities.
4. Congress rejects the neoliberal agenda which seeks to punish the vulnerable; paternalistically control and assimilate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and facilitate the wishes of big business over self-determination.
5. Congress rejects the neoliberal model of capitalism which is attacking land rights, driving increased levels of inequality, creating an underclass of workers and undermining the basis of democracy and the idea of a fair and equal society.

INEQUALITY & POWER

6. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people inequality is about lack of power. Inequality is at work when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are denied:
 - a) The right to be the architects of government policy that affects them;
 - b) The right to decent living standards and a social safety net;
 - c) The right to universal health and education;
 - d) The right to standard employment conditions and wages; and
 - e) Standard industrial and occupational health and safety protections.

AN ALTERNATIVE VISION

7. A decent living standard, just wages, social protections, the social safety net and self-determined, fulfilling employment is at the heart of the Australian Union Movement.
8. We will not sit idly by and watch while human rights and workers' rights are undermined.
9. The Australian union movement will work to identify, increase and empower its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership for a strong representative voice to ensure these rights.
10. Our alternative vision is one where:
 - a) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people & communities are the architects of their place in Australia and are equal partners with government in the development and implementation of policies that effect their way of life and livelihoods;
 - b) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers are engaged in fulfilling employment with the standard conditions and wages afforded to other Australian workers;
 - c) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are respected; the diversity of cultures, lands and traditions are respected and seen as an integral part of the Australian identity; and
 - d) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have economic security, a decent social safety net and access to universal social services (health, education, essential services) which provide the foundation for a decent and fulfilling life with equality of opportunity.