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.
RESOLUTION

LAND TENURE

Congress condemns the erosion of Native Title rights for Indigenous Australians since the High Court ruled in the Mabo case that the application of Terra Nullius by Captain James Cooke in Australia was false.

Congress notes the Indigenous Leaders Round Table Meeting on Property Rights convened by the Australian Human Rights Commissioner in Broome on Tuesday, 19 May and Wednesday, 20 May 2015 and supports the recommendation made to Government by those Indigenous Leaders for regional conferences to be held across Australia to maximise the input from Indigenous Australians.

The ACTU Congress resolves to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, of which thousands are trade union members, against the further erosion of Native Title and urges that Land Tenure discussions have an oversight by the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples that ensures any proposal from the Australian Government meets international standards developed on Human Rights processes in the United Nations.

The ACTU Congress encourages the above towards a National Social Compact that brings into focus the developments in the area of Human Rights, the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the I.L.O. Convention 169 and a host of other Human Rights instruments in any further amendments to Land Tenure legislation.

Moved: Thomas Mayor, MUA

Seconded: Arthur Rorris, South Coast Trades and Labour Council
RESOLUTION

FEDERAL FUNDING CUTS TO INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS AND THE FORCED CLOSURE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The Trade Union movement has a proud history of standing shoulder to shoulder with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in the struggle for civil and industrial rights and we remain committed to the values of self-determination, equality and fairness for all Australians.

Australian Unions will defend the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to live on traditional lands and continue their cultural connection which is an invaluable part of Australia’s identity as a nation.

ACTU Congress is appalled by Tony Abbott’s insensitive and uneducated comments regarding Australia’s inability to fund the “lifestyle” choices of Aboriginal peoples living on their remote homelands. Tony Abbott again demonstrates his disconnection from the Aboriginal communities that he portrays to represent as the self-appointed Prime Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

Furthermore ACTU Congress condemns the over half a billion dollars in cuts to Indigenous programs and services which will impact on the rights and the quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ACTU Congress calls on the Abbott Federal Government to restore all funding to Indigenous programs and services.

ACTU Congress endorses continuing support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations being attacked by funding cuts from the Federal, State and Territory governments.

ACTU Congress endorses continued participation in the campaign to stop the forced closure of Aboriginal communities in Western Australia.

ACTU Congress endorses participation in community campaigns which defend against future attempts to close any Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islanders communities in all States & Territories.

Moved: Wayne Wood, ASU WA

Seconded: Rita Mallia, CFMEU