

## **Tangentyere Council Inc.**

PO Box 8070  
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871  
Ph. (08) 8951 4222  
Fax (08) 8952 8521  
Email: tangentyere@tangentyere.org.au



### **MEDIA RELEASE**

**29 June 2007**

#### **WORK WITH US, NOT AGAINST US**

Tangentyere Council calls on the Australian Government to implement the first recommendation of the “Little Children are Sacred” report, and work in partnership with Indigenous people and organisations, not against them.

Executive Director of Tangentyere Council, William Tilmouth, commented,

“Without involving local indigenous people and organisations, current actions will be short lived and ineffective.

“If you take all control away from people, and you also eliminate all opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own lives, then you will create the worst welfare state yet.

“You have to empower people through proper consultation and make room for them at the table, with the governments,” he said.

“If you can’t have a say in your own life, it makes you feel like sitting down and doing nothing. I thought that this was what the government was trying to change”.

Tangentyere Council will continue to work closely with all levels of government to provide and expand critical services related to the welfare of children and families as recommended by the “Little Children are Sacred” report.

Tangentyere operates effective community based programs, such as

- Working with children at risk, including the best practice Safe Families program
- Youth activities, including access to sporting competitions and the high profile Drum Atweme and Circus programs
- Inhalant substance abuse programs, including the nationally recognised CAYLUS program
- Night , day and youth patrols,
- Support for remote area night patrols
- Family well being programs
- Community centre hubs on two town camps that facilitate delivery of health and education services to residents,

- A playgroup / early childhood development program for pre school aged children
- A food voucher system, currently used voluntarily by 800 people
- Financial management assistance, advocacy and counselling.

“These programs make a difference to the lives of children, young people and families, as do the health and education programs run by the government and other organisations. But we need to do more and to have long term planning and resourcing to ensure that these sorts of programs and services have the long lasting impact that is needed.

The current visits to five remote communities “to assess infrastructure” are not the way to undertake long term planning. There are already many reports identifying the comprehensive needs in health, education, social programs and housing, so why is the government sending in the army and bureaucrats from Canberra to assess the needs – in a day or two?

Why doesn't the government act to meet the long term needs of indigenous communities, as identified many times by Indigenous people themselves, including in the “Little Children and Sacred” report, the recommendations of which the government appears to be completely ignoring. Instead we have ideology compared with evidence based information.

Tangentyere Council will be very disappointed if this opportunity to seriously address the problems highlighted in the report is wasted through lack of long term planning and lack of involvement of Indigenous people themselves.

Further enquiries contact: Mr William Tilmouth, 8951 4212 or 0417 882 825