

Banatjarl Statement

“Prevention not intervention!”

We the Aboriginal males from Katherine East Region gathered at Banatjarl on 2 July 2009, make the following statement:

We are proud Aboriginal men, proud of our culture and to achieve our vision we call on the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Government to reform the intervention, reinstate the Racial Discrimination Act and reduce the barrage of complex and contradictory changes that are disempowering Aboriginal males, resulting in “widening the gap” in Aboriginal male health and severely impacting on the lives of our children, families and the communities in which we live.

We resent that the Government has allowed the media to portray all Aboriginal men as paedophiles, and subjected us to unwarranted suspicion - we love our children and our families – we are human. We call on the Australian and Northern Territory Government to join us in the outright rejection of this practice.

We feel fearful that we are misunderstood in our natural loving actions, and this stops us fulfilling our roles as fathers, uncles, brothers, grandfathers and carers.

We have developed strategies, networks and recommendations to ensure our future roles as men in caring for children in a safe family environment that will lead to a happier, longer and healthier life that reflects opportunities experienced by the wider community.

Spoken at summit by: Warren Camfoo Jnr and Justin Miller