

The International Law Context of Recent Developments in Indigenous Policy in Australia.

A seminar convened by the National Centre for Indigenous Studies and the International Law Association (ILA).

Friday 30th October, 5.00 – 7.00pm (followed by refreshments)

Speakers: Professor Mick Dodson, Mr Greg Marks and Dr Sean Kerins

Location: Hedley Bull Centre Lecture Theatre 1

This seminar will consider Indigenous policy in Australia set against Australia's international human rights obligations.

Of immediate concern is the attempt to shut down remote discrete Aboriginal communities - as exemplified by threats by the Western Australian Government in respect of up to 150 WA communities. Former Prime Minister Tony Abbott's 'lifestyle choices' comments in regard to such communities, and the controversy that followed, highlight the policy emphasis on centralisation of small and medium sized Aboriginal communities that has characterised the past decade. There is pressure on Aboriginal people to leave their homelands communities and move to large settlements or regional townships.

Australian Governments increasingly act in Indigenous policy in a unilateral manner, oblivious both to Aboriginal aspirations and international obligations. It is timely to refocus on these international obligations.



Professor Dodson will speak on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as it affects policies such as the right to live on ancestral lands, and associated rights of self-government and self-determination. Australia has endorsed UNDRIP, but is acting in ways which appear to negate rights established in the Declaration. The presentation will provide a reminder to Government and others that UNDRIP is not just a set of general propositions but a program of real and substantive rights.

Mr Greg Marks will speak on obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Australia has ratified this Covenant. He will highlight particular provisions of ICESCR and its jurisprudence that support the right of Aboriginal people to live on their homelands and the linkages to the economic, social and cultural well-being and viability of Aboriginal communities.



Dr Sean Kerins will draw out some of these linkages as they impact on a contemporary real life situation. His presentation will concern communities in the Gulf region of the Northern Territory. Dr Kerins has been working closely with these communities for some years as they endeavour to establish and secure a firm base for economic, social and cultural development. For these communities there are significant difficulties including inappropriate Government policy settings and practice.

Presented by:



National Centre for Indigenous Studies
International Law Association

This lecture is free and open to the public

Registration: via [EventBrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

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