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Compiled by Lucinda Stewart

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this publication may contain images of deceased persons.

## EDITORIAL

On 15 April, it was 25 years since the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody were handed down. In his 13 April speech to the National Press Club—reproduced in this edition at page 24—Mr Patrick Dodson, one of the original Commissioners, emphasised how little progress there has been since the recommendations were made. He questioned the effectiveness of the implementation of the recommendations, specifically citing increased incarceration rates for Aboriginal people since 1991 and the Royal Commission's 29 recommendations for 'imprisonment as a last resort'.

Also in this edition, we publish Dr Stephen Gray's damning review of the Northern Territory Intervention, based on the findings of the Castan Centre's report, which scored the Intervention's effectiveness against human rights and other standards. The findings—that the Northern Territory has made less progress in and is significantly behind all other jurisdictions in all 'Closing the Gap' measures—are in marked contrast to the 2016 Closing the Gap report, which while referring to 'mixed results' also picked out several positive changes.

Elly Patira is the Executive Director of Australian Lawyers for Remote Aboriginal Rights—the pro bono legal service representing Santa Teresa residents in their claim before the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal. In her article, she explains the claim in detail, including the perhaps unexpected consequences of this 'secure tenure' arrangement for the Department of Housing as landlord. The Santa Teresa housing claim is the first collective community legal action of its type, and it has already had an immediate impact, suggesting it represents a significant opportunity to redefine and advance Aboriginal housing rights and standards in Australia.

What binds these pieces is their agreement on the importance of the principal of self-determination in addressing disadvantages faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as their emphasis on the need to pay closer attention to the human rights of Indigenous people in the formation and implementation of policies that affect them. Alice Barter of the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia takes this a step further in her piece, which explores the relationship Aboriginal offenders have with the criminal justice system in a postcolonial context, with particular reference to interactions between the judiciary and Aboriginal offenders in sentencing proceedings.

The May/June edition of the ILB will be a special edition focusing on Constitutional recognition, and will feature specially commissioned artwork created in response to the issue.

### Emma Rafferty

Editor