



Australian Mission to the United Nations

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.australia-unsc.gov.au

13th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

12 May 2014

Principles of Good Governance consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Articles 3 to 6 and 46

**Statement by Ms Tania Rishniw, Assistant Secretary
Australian Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and**

**Ms Andrea Mason, Indigenous Community Representative,
Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council
Aboriginal Corporation**

(check against delivery)

Thank you Madam Chair.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land we are gathered on today, and pay my respects to their elders both past and present.

Indigenous Affairs is a national priority for Australia. The Prime Minister of Australia is committed to establishing a new engagement and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. He is supported by a dedicated Cabinet Minister for Indigenous Affairs and a Parliamentary

Secretary. This is an unprecedented effort focused on improving Indigenous disadvantage at the highest levels of Government within Australia.

This has seen responsibility for Indigenous specific policy, programmes and services at the national level move to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australia's lead Government agency.

This transfer will address some of the structural and logistical problems faced when Indigenous programmes and services are delivered through multiple agencies.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet will use its lead role to drive coordination and ensure Indigenous affairs remains a priority for all agencies.

The Department will also work closely with the state and territory governments which deliver most of the programmes and services critical to Closing the Gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Australia is committed to a fresh approach to engage Indigenous Australians more on issues that affect them. Remote and regional engagement is central to the approach.

I would like now to introduce my colleague Andrea Mason, who is an Indigenous, and Empowered Communities, leader.

{Pass to Andrea Mason}

I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land we are gathered on today, and pay my respects to their elders both past and present.

My name is Andrea Mason and I am a representative from the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation. I am also member of the Steering Committee for the Australian Government's Empowered Communities initiative.

The Empowered Communities initiative is being developed by Government as an Empowered Communities Model for engaging with Indigenous Australians. It aims to strengthen local leadership and governance and build strong, healthy, prosperous and safe communities. The Empowered Communities Group developing the model is comprised of local leaders from eight regions around Australia in recognition that Indigenous locally-led responsibility is crucial to effective and sustainable reform.

This model exemplifies involvement of Indigenous people in decision-making at a grassroots level.

{Pass to Tania Rishniw}

A better deal for Indigenous Australians is at the heart of the priorities of the Australian Government: that children go to school, that adults have real jobs and that communities are safe, and where the rule of law is observed.

The Australian Government looks forward to working with a wide range of Indigenous people and communities to achieve better outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

Thank you Madam Chair.