



UN Permanent Forum on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

17th Session New York, 16 - 27 April, 2018

Item 3: Follow up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum Empowerment of Indigenous women

INTERVENTION by the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, delivered by Councillor for the North West Region, and member of the Gamilaraay People, Deputy Chairperson Anne Dennis.

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council of Australia congratulates you on your reappointment as Chairperson and we pay respect to the Elders and Ancestors of these lands and of the world's Indigenous People.

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council acknowledges the previous work of the Permanent Forum to defend and promote the empowerment of Indigenous women.

In recognising the ongoing and unique disadvantage of Indigenous women, we recommend that the Permanent Forum encourage Member States to:

- **Increase representation and participation of Indigenous women through adequate resourcing of Indigenous institutions** to ensure Indigenous women are realising shared ambitions as leaders and decision-makers, in line with Articles 3, 21, 23 and 24 of the Declaration,
- Call on the Australian Government to establish a **National taskforce to investigate and report on the deaths and over**

representation of Indigenous women in custody and to make comprehensive recommendations for systemic change, following on from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

- Develop **comprehensive national action plans to reduce violence against Indigenous women**, designed and led by Indigenous women and community controlled organisations, and
- **Invest in Indigenous-led programs designed specifically for Indigenous women**, with the aim of strengthening Indigenous communities and reducing overrepresentation in the criminal justice system.

Indigenous women in Australia continue to experience multiple forms of discrimination and bear the disproportionate impacts of socio-economic disadvantage, removal of children, family and sexual violence coupled with the lack of culturally appropriate measures to address such issues.

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council strongly supports measures that reinforce the rights of Indigenous women, to participate in decision-making processes and to support the empowerment of Indigenous women to overcome violence, racism and systemic discrimination. A National Taskforce should be established to investigate and report on the deaths of Indigenous women in custody and to make comprehensive recommendations for systemic change.

Indigenous women have a strong and important leadership role in Indigenous communities and community organizations. The inclusion of women's voices and leadership should be at the forefront at all levels of decision-making.

NSWALC supports developing **comprehensive national action plans to reduce violence against Indigenous women**, designed and led by Indigenous women and community controlled organisations.

The widespread incarceration of women experiencing very high levels of family or partner violence along with increasing removals of children shows we have a long way to go in our fight to ensure the human rights of Aboriginal women are respected.

Today, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women comprise 34 per cent of women behind bars but only 2 per cent of the adult female Australian population¹.

Since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths and Custody in 1991, the proportion of Indigenous women in prisons has increased from 18 to 33 per cent, according to data from the Australian Human Rights Commission and the University of New South Wales.

¹ Over-represented and overlooked: the crisis of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's growing over-imprisonment Report by Human Rights Law Centre and Change The Record (2017).