

Position Statement June 2011

Northern Territory National Emergency Response (NTER)

The Lowitja Institute is a not-for-profit company formed to build a national strategic research agenda to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Our agenda is determined by the priorities of Australia's First Peoples through extensive and ongoing consultation and partnerships. The principle of strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership at all levels of research and innovation is central to our identity.

The Northern Territory National Emergency Response (NTER, also known as 'the intervention') was implemented by the Howard government in June 2007. In 2009, the Prime Minister and Northern Territory Chief Minister signed the *Closing the Gap Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement* that committed both governments to build on, and enhance, core NTER measures. These measures have significant implications for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and therefore are directly related to the work of the Lowitja Institute.

The purpose of this statement is to outline the position of the Lowitja Institute in relation to the current and future activities of the Closing the Gap Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement.

The position of the Institute is as follows:

- the Lowitja Institute welcomes government initiatives aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples
- any measures implemented by the government must be based on appropriate consultation and agreement with the people and communities they directly affect
- the Closing the Gap deadlines set by Council of Australian Governments (COAG) are ambitious and will take hard work, goodwill and cooperation to be achieved
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members living in Alice Springs are best placed to comment on the state of the situation there
- support from government, no matter from which side of politics, is encouraged as long as it is based on consultation with those who will receive such support and an agreed approach
- the Lowitja Institute places a high priority on appropriate use of evidence in a policy setting.

All media enquires seeking comment on behalf of the Lowitja Institute on the NTER will be referred to the information contained in this position statement.

For more information about the Lowitja Institute and the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, go to: www.lowitja.org.au