

30 YEARS OF SELF GOVERNMENT AND CONTINUING CONSTITUTIONAL INEQUALITY

In this 30th year of Self Government the Statehood Steering Committee wants all Australians to ensure that any discussions about the future of Australian governance and the structure of the Federation will consider the continuing **unequal status** of people of the Northern Territory.

“In the past week we have heard two major announcements that will impact the Northern Territory, yet because of our inferior constitutional status we are not guaranteed an opportunity to respond,” says Malarndirri McCarthy Chair of the Statehood Steering Committee.

On 3rd February Prime Minister Rudd announced the establishment of the Australia 2020 summit, which includes

‘The future of Australian governance: renewed democracy, a more open government (including the role of the media) the structure of the Federation and the rights and responsibilities of citizens’.

Ms McCarthy says “We welcome a discussion about the future of the Australian federation but we recognise we are unequal players in the debate. We can only contribute as equals if the Northern Territory is a STATE first.’

The second announcement is Senator Bob Brown’s proposal in his press release of 5th February ‘to restore the legitimacy of the Northern Territory legislation allowing voluntary euthanasia for terminally ill patients’ which was overridden by the Kevin Andrews’ Private Members Bill in 1997.

Statehood Steering Committee Co Chair Bradley says, “Whatever the merits of Senator Brown’s proposal, if he wanted to ensure the legitimacy of Northern Territory legislation then he should first support a move for the Territory to become the 7th state in the Federation.”

‘If Senator Bob Brown wants to ‘restore the right of thousands of Australians’ he should work to ensure basic constitutional rights for Territorians.’

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