



MATTERS AFFECTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

TWELFTH ASSEMBLY, UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

RESOLUTION 09.37

- 09.37 The Assembly resolved:
- 09.37.01 to call on all Australian governments (Commonwealth, State and Territory) to use negotiated partnership approaches in regard to Indigenous Australian citizens, which includes the right to negotiate and communicate in their language of choice, and through their specified mechanisms
- 09.37.02 to call on the Commonwealth Government to rectify the lack of negotiation to date with regard to the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) by urgently facilitating a “negotiation forum” in the Northern Territory to address government policies and programs, such forum to respect the right of Aboriginal Peoples to control and set the agenda, the purpose of which is to:
- a) bring Aboriginal Peoples together from across the Northern Territory;
 - b) allow a diversity of Aboriginal voices to be heard, including those community people who are connected on the ground as well as those who are representing organisations;
 - c) develop a position on an appropriate policy response to the issues facing Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory;
 - d) agree to appropriate protocols;
 - e) agree to an appropriate methodology that recognises and affirms the diversity of Aboriginal ways of meeting, making decisions and developing processes; and
 - f) ensure that Governments are negotiating with spokespeople who are true and authentic community voices, elected and endorsed by the communities they are representing and especially include the voices of the Traditional owners
- 09.37.03 to affirm the joint statement of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) and the National Aboriginal and Islander Christian Alliance (NATSICA), made at the NATSIEC sponsored Forum, concerning the Northern Territory Emergency Response, 10 June 2009
- 09.37.04 in collaboration with Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and the Northern Synod, to identify funding and appropriate resources and make that funding and resources available to the National Aboriginal and Islander Christian Alliance (NATSICA) to bring about a church based forum in negotiation with the churches (see item 1.5 of the NATSIEC/NATSICA statement) to be held in the Northern Territory
- 09.37.05 to note with strong endorsement, the action of the Australian Commonwealth Government in recognising the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- 09.37.06 to convey to the Commonwealth Government our view that it is in contravention of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples while any parts of the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act (RDA) are suspended for Northern Territory Indigenous citizens, or if it reinstates this Act with different qualifications for Indigenous people



- 09.37.07 to convey to the Commonwealth Government our view that the pressures being placed on Northern Territory Indigenous leaders to sign permanent lease agreements in order to receive funding for housing and other infrastructure in their communities, is an abuse of government power and is not an appropriate approach in developing negotiated partnerships with Indigenous peoples
- 09.37.08 to convey to the Northern Territory Government (NTG) our view that the NTG Working Future policy, that proposes development of twenty service centres (economic hubs) is detrimental to the spiritual, economic and social life of Indigenous peoples who live in homeland centres and call for the policy to be revised to include respectful recognition and support for the continued development and support of homeland centres
- 09.37.09 to convey to the Northern Territory Government (NTG) our view that the NTG is in contravention of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples concerning their current education policy particularly the compulsory teaching in English for the first four hours of each school day, which limits education choices for Indigenous citizens of the Northern Territory concerning their first language and
- 09.37.10 to seek the guidance of UnitingJustice, UnitingCare, the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Congress and the Northern Synod, in determining how to best represent the above positions of the Assembly.