



The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
MEMBER FOR WENTWORTH

Ref: CD/4070/11/8/09

Dr Rhonda Galbally AO
CEO
Our Community
51 Stanley Street
West Melbourne VIC 3003

13 AUG 2009

Dear Dr Galbally

Thank you for your letter dated 21 July 2009 and for taking the time to contact me.

I note your views regarding the emergency measures introduced in indigenous communities by the Howard Government in July of 2007, and respectfully disagree with your description of this process and its subsequent results.

The Coalition feels that the decisive action taken by the former Government was a justified and appropriate response to protect Indigenous children from abuse. Under this programme, the Howard Government substantially increased funding, improved primary health care service delivery, introduced Shared Responsibility agreements and required Government agencies to be more accountable and provide more coordinated services to the communities they assisted.

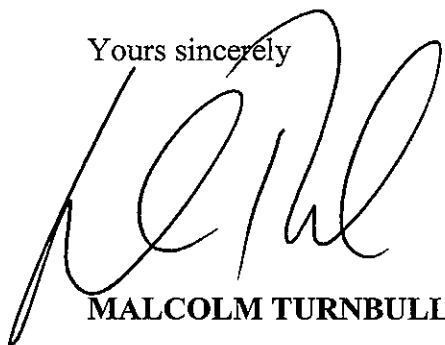
As a direct consequence of these policies, there is now less drug and alcohol abuse, less domestic violence and less gambling in the intervention townships – with more money being spent on the necessities of life. These are achievements of which the Coalition is particularly proud.

The Rudd Government recently sought to change the intervention by reinstating the 'permit system' in Indigenous communities and watering down the ban on pornography in these areas. The Coalition successfully opposed these changes to maintain the Northern Territory Intervention in its original form.

We are currently developing new policies aimed at continuing to improve the health, education and employment outcomes and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians. We remain committed to making government departments accountable for better outcomes, while encouraging greater personal responsibility among Indigenous Australians and communities.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to me on this important issue.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Turnbull', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

MALCOLM TURNBULL