**“KARRINJARLA MUWAJARRI”: WE ARE CALLING FOR AN INDEFINITE POLICE CEASEFIRE**

Yuendumu Community Statement of Demands

May 2022

We are senior Elders, families and community members from the Warlipiri Nation. There has been a lot of attention on our community from political leaders and media following the Constable Zachary Rolfe shooting and killing of our loved one, Kumanjayi Walker, on 29 November 2019. We are driving this injustice, and the injustice of Rolfe’s acquittal. Above all, we remember that Yakaparangku Warnkaru Matters, Black Lives Matter.

April 2022 marked thirty-five years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody was last held. The deaths of custodies at the hands of police and other custodial workers has been widely acknowledged, and thousands of indigenous deaths in police custody were delivered in 1991, they have been largely ignored and over 500 First Nations peoples have died in police custody throughout Australia. Not one police officer or custodial worker has ever been convicted with any of these deaths. We do not want our loved one to be just another statistic that are not acted on. We already hold the answers and strategies we need. We do not want any more consultations with governments who do not listen to us. We demand self-determination, our rightful decision-making authority, and our resources to be restored to us. This is a list of our demands. What we are calling for is karrinjarla muwajarri, a police ceasefire. Indefinitely.

Everything that has happened to our community over the past fifteen years has been in the context of the racist NT Intervention. In 2007, the Commonwealth government suspended the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975, the so-called ‘Stronger Futures’ legislation in 2012. We have suffered compulsory acquisition of township lands, prohibition on consideration of our customary law, attacks on the permit system, laws to control our community, imposition of government managers, widespread unemployment, control of our incomes, increased police numbers and powers that drive police harassment and violence.

With the ‘Stronger Futures’ legislation set to expire in July this year, we are calling for an end to all discriminatory powers and laws that were introduced with the NT Intervention and a reassertion of community control. Funding for punitive agencies sponsored by the Intervention needs to be redirected into our expert community control. Funding for punitive agencies sponsored by the Intervention needs to be redirected into our expert community control. Funding for punitive agencies sponsored by the Intervention needs to be redirected into our expert community control. Funding for punitive agencies sponsored by the Intervention needs to be redirected into our expert community control.

Yakaparangku Warnkaru Matters
Black Lives Matter

Karrinjarla Muwajarri
The NT Intervention must end

WE DEMAND

1. No guns in remote communities. NT Police must immediately be disarmed of weapons in remote communities. This is the only way that there will be a ceasefire.

2. NT Police must be defunded at large. Funds should instead be redirected to community-controlled alternatives, like night patrols and community mediation, that have proven time and time again that we are the best equipped to keep ourselves safe.

3. Only Warlipiri governance and authority in our community. We will not tolerate any further ex-military postings or external police units from elsewhere in the NT or Australia. Only First Nations police lieutenants and Elders and our community should have decision-making powers over policing. This includes having the ability to evict police who do not cooperate with local community or respect our decision-making authority.

4. An end to discriminatory powers and laws that were introduced with the NT Intervention including special police powers, compulsory income management, prohibition of consideration of customary law, and other policies.

5. A restoration of laws and structures that respect our local community control. This includes, but isn’t limited to, our permit system, tribal council, community housing, and our community health clinic.

6. That funding be redirected from punitive agencies to community-controlled services. All our local Warlipiri organisations require increased funding. We need resources for a properly safeguarded employment program that can allow for self-determined community development that meets local needs. This will allow our people to live a full life in our communities on our lands.

7. Kids on Country not in custody. Youth detention has grown under the Intervention. The criminalisation of our young people must stop. They are locked up as young as ten years old for minor things and they are abused by the system. We want an end to youth detention. Bring our young people back to community and Country for healing and support programs designed and delivered by us.

8. No one police officer or custodial worker has ever been convicted with any of these deaths. We need a Black Media Watch to stop the racism in media reporting on our First Nations people.

9. Defamatory content about Kumanjayi Walker must be immediately withdrawn from publication.

10. Far North communities and Elders need to approve any media visits to Yuendumu and any media reporting must be consistent with the cultural protocols and trauma-informed processes. They must listen to and act on our cultural guidance of our community.

11. We are calling for a National Day of Action on 18 June 2022.

We are still in sorrow

WE DEMAND

We need the true story about our loved one, Kumanjayi Walker, to be told. The mainstream media in this country is racist. It put our loved one on trial through defamation, racialised stereotyping and blatant lies.

The Channel 7 program in November 2021, for example, was shameless pro-police propaganda. Channel 7 came into our community even though we denied them permission through our local organisations, the Central Land Council and Putu Nurrpa Warnkaru Mati (PAM) Media. The racist report was produced without our consent, it broadcast a video of the shooting of our loved one and it caused our families and communities right across central desert the most serious trauma and distress. We don’t want some ‘journalist’ covering our truth. We demand our self-determination, our right to truth and to be heard by our people.

In the wake of the not guilty verdict in March 2022, many outlets produced very racist reports, particularly Kristin Shorten’s articles in The Australian. We want to be able to correct the lies they have told. Racism media peddles racist violence in the streets and our people suffer. Racism in the media causes our people pain. Media need to be accountable. We dont want anyone talking about our community who know nothing about our community. Where there are racist communities that was written in police records, not the truth that we know. We want to let our loved one rest. We want the stories of how he was loved for, and cared for, to be shared and known

12. We need a Black Media Watch to stop the racism in media reporting on our First Nations people.

13. There must be no more all-white juries. Customary law must be considered in all court processes and in the application of colonial law.

14. A retrieval for Zachary Rolfe in Mparntwe Alice Springs. We did not see a just or fair trial. We did not see all relevant evidence coming back to our community.

15. An independent investigation into all aspects of undue court processes and the application of colonial law. The trial should have taken place in Mparntwe Alice Springs, not 1500 km away. We were unheard and disrespected. Rolfe must be held accountable for shooting our loved one, Kumanjayi Walker, and we demand a re-trial.

16. We are calling for a National Day of Action on 18 June to demand justice for Kumanjayi Walker, justice for the many deaths of First Nations people in custody, an end to the discriminatory Intervention powers and reassertion of community control.

We want other First Nations families, communities and supporters join us in protest, amplify our voices and put forward your own demands for justice. Let’s come out in big numbers and build collective power together to force change.

WE DEMAND