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In 1849 Henry Thoreau wrote "Civil Disobedience" expressing his disgust with what was essentially entrenched racism, arguing that individuals should not permit governments to overrule or atrophy their consciences and that they had a duty to avoid such acquiescence because it enabled governments to make them agents of injustice.

We three are writing this on behalf of a collective of concerned citizens, Aboriginal and non –Aboriginal.

In 2007, we were horrified when under the governance of Mr Howard the army was sent to impose the NT Emergency Response (NTER) now known as the NT Intervention. Much has been said since, we have written submissions, talked to many people directly affected by the policies of the Intervention and we breathed a sigh of relief when a Labor government was elected.

That relief was short-lived, that same Labor government has not been listening and now plans to extend the principles of the Intervention for 10 more years.

This one size fits all approach to welfare is a mistake. History shows prohibition of any form has never worked. Aboriginal people living in the NT are worse off now than they were when the NTER was introduced and a whole generation of children are growing up under a mantle of shame. The Liberals had only a few months of the Intervention, the Labor government will be remembered for perpetuating the mistake.

We will not acquiesce and become as Thoreau so eloquently put it, agents of injustice.

Sincerely

Dr Alitya Rigney

Ms Pilawuk White

Ms Sue Gilbey