

Director's statement

This documentary follows the process of implementation of the government's recently announced intervention into the welfare of Aboriginal communities. The focus will be on several communities in the Katherine region and include characters drawn from the service recipients as well as the service providers. Filming will document the two stages of the intervention; the assessment and audit stage, and the Implementation stage with the focus being on the latter. Shooting will cover a twelve month period, with the program completed in early 2009.

The Government, with bi-partisan support, has injected funds, manpower and powerful rhetoric to make the intervention happen quickly, efficiently and with maximum effect. The intervention involves bans on alcohol and hardcore pornography, welfare restrictions, increases in police numbers and compulsory health checks for Aboriginal children,

This state of emergency will impact on Indigenous Australians in a way not seen since the early days of colonial 'Protection' policies. Children will be internally examined for signs of abuse, monies will be withheld in trust funds, and communities will be patrolled by soldiers and police.

The objective is to interrupt the cycle of violence & abuse perpetrated against children, in the hope that their physical and mental wellbeing will save lives. This red-tag in Indigenous Affairs may well surpass the Land Rights Movement for its potency and impact. After all, what is worth more? Life or Land?

The intervention will have an incredible impact on indigenous Australians for a plethora of reasons. Shame, denial, culture, pride, history, power will all play a part in a subject no-one ever wants to speak of – paedophilia driven by rivers of grog. The critical question is - does Australia have the united willpower to save children from abusers who are primarily their protectors?

The intervention surely demands a filmic record of very considerable power. This is shocking yet brilliant opportunity for an in-depth documentary. The subject demands absolute truths from all participants if it's to rise above the 7sec grab news montage. I seek complete access to all arenas, rolling tape in a quietly inquiring, intimate way. I propose to get behind the set scenes where all may be revealed in a gesture, a child's smile, a politician flexing influence, or a nurse simply doing her best.

Like it or not, this topic is red hot politically, morally & socially. The genie cannot be put back in the bottle. It will dominate the news, the office and the pub until either failure or success is pronounced. Regardless of the call, indigenous Australians will be divided.

This crisis will resonate long & loud throughout history, as will the people in this story.

Julie Nimmo