

HELPING INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

Position:

- FAMILY FIRST believes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, like all Australians, have rights and responsibilities. Indigenous Australians have the right to good education, housing and health care, but like all Australians they also have a responsibility to make sure their children go to school, their homes are well maintained and they look after their family's health. Many Indigenous Australians live happily with their neighbours in well functioning communities, but many do not;
- FAMILY FIRST believes there is a need to rebuild the role of families in many indigenous communities to help combat drug and alcohol abuse, disrespect for neighbors, lack of personal responsibility and the loss of basic social standards. Alcohol and drugs have led to a breakdown in values in the community; Indigenous Australians can only improve their lives by establishing and maintaining supportive and functional communities;
- FAMILY FIRST supports the Government's action to take charge of remote indigenous communities but is concerned the shortage of doctors in regional Australia could undermine the health plan.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST has a plan to counter binge drinking, which is a scourge across the Australian community. Binge drinking is a huge issue in many indigenous communities, leading to the neglect of children, sexual abuse and other violence and the early deaths of many people;
- FAMILY FIRST wants to ensure that all indigenous children are literate to a standard equal to non-indigenous children, so they will be able to fully participate in the community. This requires a substantial investment by Governments in schools, but it also requires indigenous parents to make sure their children attend school and to ensure education is valued. Parents should have their

welfare payments quarantined if their children are not attending school;

- FAMILY FIRST wants a substantial investment to ensure that all Indigenous Australians have access to good health care. But equally parents who are not ensuring their children's basic health care should have their welfare payments quarantined;
- To boost the number of doctors in indigenous communities, FAMILY FIRST proposes abolishing HECS debts for medical students who commit to work in these areas for a minimum of two years after they graduate. (FAMILY FIRST proposes a similar scheme for medical graduates who commit to work for at least five years in regional or rural areas). The scheme would be capped at 250 doctors and reviewed according to need. HECS fees for a six-year medical degree are up to \$51,000;
- FAMILY FIRST wants to separate indigenous shire councils from canteens, so they do not profit from alcohol. Councils should be focusing on the needs of their communities without the perverse incentives of alcohol profits encouraging alcohol abuse in their communities;
- FAMILY FIRST believes that there should be an investigation into the feasibility of the private ownership of housing for indigenous Australians, as it may lead to better housing maintenance, house proud families and better communities.