



United Nations Human Rights Council, 41st session, 1 July 2019

Item 3 Clustered ID with Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty

Oral statement by the Human Rights Law Centre and Djirra (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service (Victoria))

Delivered by Antoinette Braybrook

Mr President,

I am an Aboriginal woman. My family is Kuku Yalanji.

Thank you Special Rapporteur for your Report on the UK and for your communications to Australia about our harsh and discriminatory social security system.

Our First Nations people continue to experience extreme levels of poverty and disadvantage resulting from punitive, racist and discriminatory government policies.

There are many examples but I want to highlight the impact the ParentsNext social security program is having.

It affects mostly women and almost all affected are single mothers - about 95%

It imposes pointless and demeaning conditions on mums to attend numerous appointments and services.

Not meeting this means their income is at risk of being suspended.

In our work nationally we see first-hand the impact ParentsNext is having on our women, our mothers and especially those who are experiencing family violence.

Their priority is safety not rigid and unrealistic bureaucratic requirements.

ParentsNext is not helping, it is pushing our mothers deeper into poverty.

We can provide many examples of mothers having to live weeks without any income to feed their children or get them to school.

This program is another barrier, another violation of human rights, to be financially secure, to be safe and supported.

It prevents our mums from growing their kids strong in culture and identity.

The Australian Government must abandon ParentsNext.

Poverty is not a choice – it is direct result of systemic failure.

Thank you.