

## Media Release

31 August 2021



### **Wilcannia Covid crisis again highlights the failures of Australia's activist Aboriginal elites & their media & political boosters - aspects of the failure verge on insanity**

New South Wales is now in the middle of a State-wide Covid-19 lockdown, which poses a major threat to Aboriginal communities across the State and one case study, Wilcannia in western NSW, highlights the unresolved practical issues that are creating the risk, **Your Life Your Vote: Take Control** chair, Josephine Cashman, said today.

“The community had no food and no effective Covid-response plan. With the help of Simon Cotter, an auctioneer from an old Wilcannia family, whose great grandfather was the first doctor in the area and the protector of Aboriginal people, a truck company, Turbans 4 Australia, and Foodbank Australia we delivered 556 boxes of food last Sunday 22 August to the Darling Shire. Unfortunately, this took days to be delivered to families as the distributors had to complete a Protective Personal Gear Training Course (PPE). Why weren't locals put through these courses beforehand, as part of a Covid risk-management plan?

“The powers-that-be, including the failed Aboriginal affairs industrial complex, had 12 months to plan for it. Where is the local health authority's – the failed Maari Ma – Covid management plan for the district? Yet the activist ABC at Broken Hill continues to go to unrepresentative activists like Maari Ma for comment and advice on the situation. The ABC should be

interrogating Maari Ma, not broadcasting their incompetence.

“If that isn’t insane enough, we now have an Aboriginal man locked in police cells in Broken Hill, after being released from prison without a care plan or any means of getting back to Wilcannia, who was subsequently charged with Covid breaches. He has been there for four days now and nothing is being done to fix the madness. His family is seriously distressed and it has been impossible to get any officials or media to respond to the situation.

“It has been a very poor response all round and there are still many unresolved issues at Wilcannia, which again highlights how decades of massive Aboriginal affairs funding have propped up and lined the pockets of elites, but failed to deliver for local communities.

“I wrote to the NSW Premier more than a year ago, on 6 April 2020, begging her to be prepared for Covid in Wilcannia. We requested an urgent phone appointment with the Premier to discuss the potential healthcare crisis and emphasised that Wilcannia Aboriginal people have had poor encounters with the current State and Commonwealth ministers responsible for Indigenous affairs and their departments and public servants.

“As we know, there's been a managed decline of Australia, they're using Aboriginal issues to divide the country. They want to use this for a campaign claiming Australians are racist. The green elites created this push in order to change our Constitution. Their strategy is not going to work. The Wilcannia people are not stupid. For decades they've been treated like garbage by the failed leaders for their division agenda. But, they are first class Australian citizens and they're not going to turn against our country, and I'm not letting them down.

“After 50 years Aboriginal affairs represents missed opportunities, lies, failed leadership with an out-of-control public sector managing it. There’s a web of not-for-profit organisations, which hold enormous power and have access to rivers of public monies. But, as we’ve now seen in Wilcannia, they receive millions of dollars and they could not even prepare for the COVID risks. They have had more than 12 months and they were warned. We were always concerned there was no COVID plan.

Wilcannia Land Council Board member and **Your Life Your Vote: Take Control committee member, Sissy King**, said they should have listened to us 12 months ago when Josephine Cashman was on the ground out here working with us.

“Had they done so we would not be in the situation we are in today. Many of them are too busy worrying about future agenda's and not the current situation.

“Many also feel scared with the police and ADF turning up at random times. It is easy to get the community onside. But we even have activist journalists calling community members encouraging them to complain about the police and the ADF. MP Linda Burney and Senator Lidia Thorpe have also made unhelpful, divisive comments. And the NSW Government blamed Wilcannia residents attending a funeral, which they do more often than they should because of the atrocious state of affairs in the local community,” Ms King said.

Chair of the Wilcannia Land Council, Michael Kennedy, who is in lockdown as a result of a family member testing positive to COVID, said it took two days for NSW Health to contact him.

“They had no idea what was going on and it was very stressful. I was lucky I knew someone in the health sector who provided me with advice, but the majority do not have such access. There is now a daily update provided on the COVID cases, but no streamlined communication to families and no one taking responsibility.

“The issue here is there is four organisations managing the response with no leader including Redie[1] (employment services), Central Darling Shire[2], Far West NSW Local Health District[3], Maarima (Aboriginal health service)[4]

“It is a mess and the solution is:

1. Bring in a logistics manager - someone who has the responsibility to coordinate the response
2. Text message updates and a community communication plan
3. 24 hour 1800 number for residents to call to report problems and concerns
4. Bring in a temporary Telstra mobile satellite immediately - the phone reception is bad at the best of times, but it is worse now, and people have to go outside to take and receive calls.
5. Free reliable WIFI in order to receive updates and information - many have run out of phone credit and cannot use their phone at all.

**Your Life Your Vote: Take Control** was launched in Australia in July this year, with the aim of stopping the Labor Party, the Greens, and other extreme Left-wing political movements, from using Aboriginal votes to pursue ineffective economic policies and weird “woke” social ideas, which are not shared by the vast majority of Aboriginal people.

**Your Life Your Vote: Take Control** inaugural committee has representatives from most Australian States and Territories.

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[1] <https://redie.org.au/archive/contact-us-2/our-centres>

[2] <https://www.centraldarling.nsw.gov.au/Home>

[3] <http://www.fwlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/>

[4] <https://www.maarima.com.au/indigenous-health-support-service>

More information on **Your Life Your Vote: Take Control** can be found at <https://yourvote.org.au>

It is also on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

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