

## **Aboriginal Affairs**

It is a tragic reality that Aboriginal Australians do not share equally in the benefits of Australian life. Be it health, housing, employment, education, wealth, infant mortality or life expectancy, Aboriginal Australians are doing poorly when compared with non-Aboriginal Australians.

Most Aboriginal people live in communities in regional and outer regional areas. These communities have little economic activity, high unemployment, poor housing, limited services, an income stream almost entirely comprised of welfare payments (or royalties) and little prospect of becoming socially or economically viable. Most are in complete disarray. Child abuse and neglect is in epidemic proportions.

- Family First believes five key areas need to be addressed if a better life is to be created for Aboriginal people. These are:
  - ⇒ *Community Order*
  - ⇒ *Workforce Participation*
  - ⇒ *Education*
  - ⇒ *Home Ownership*
  - ⇒ *Connecting with the Modern World*

### *Community Order*

Restoring order in communities is critical. As unpalatable as it is to many, “whitefella” law must be applied everywhere to protect the interests of vulnerable people, people who are, when all is said and done, citizens of Australia and entitled to the full protection that citizenship affords.

### *Workforce Participation*

Breaking the reliance on welfare and boosting workforce participation is critical. Any policy, program or system not based on economic reality is doomed to failure.

### *Education*

A strong foundational education cannot be delivered in remote communities. Family First believes that opportunities need to be created through boarding schools in cities and regional centres or through other educational alternatives so that those who seek a better life can grasp it.

### *Home Ownership*

Home ownership has long been the primary means through which Australians gain a tangible stake in the nation and accumulate wealth which serves them during their lives, especially in retirement. The family home is a source of refuge, a symbol of security and a place of comfort. It provides an asset that can be sold, transferred, mortgaged, extended, bequeathed or improved to meet changing needs throughout a lifetime.

Family First believes that such are the benefits of home ownership in building equity and providing stability, it is important that strategies be pursued to assist Aboriginal people into home-ownership as an important capital formation initiative.

### *Connecting with the modern world*

Family First believes that the only long term solution is for Aboriginal Australians to move into the modern world and connect with the modern economy. The first step must be the removal from the statute books any law which distinguishes between any Australian on the basis of race or colour.