



UN Human Rights Council 41st Session

***ParentsNext must be abolished***

By Antoinette Braybrook (in a joint statement with the Human Rights Law Centre)

Mr President,

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

Thank you Special Rapporteur for your communications to the Australian Government about its harsh and discriminatory social security system.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 percent.

It imposes pointless and demeaning conditions on mums to attend numerous appointments and services. Not meeting these conditions means their income is at risk of being suspended.

In our work nationally we see firsthand the impact ParentsNext is having on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, mothers and especially those escaping 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 kids or get them to school.

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

Geneva, 1 July 2019

\*This is the extended version of Djirra's positions on this issue. Due to time limitations, the oral presentation to the Human Rights Council was an abridged version of the above. Watch the video for the shortened version.