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Education union condemns shameful NT government decision to scrap Treaty process

The union representing teachers and support staff in Queensland and Northern Territory non-government schools has condemned the Northern Territory government's decision to axe plans to negotiate a Treaty with First Nations Peoples.

It comes as the most recent Commonwealth Closing the Gap Annual Report (2024) indicates only five of 19 key *Closing the Gap* targets are on track to be met.

Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) Branch Secretary Terry Burke said the decision undid seven years of meaningful progress and undermined considerable reconciliation efforts.

"The decision is shameful but unsurprising and characteristic of a government not fully committed to reconciliation," Mr Burke said.

"Seven years of hard work and considerable funding were invested into this Treaty process, which has now devastatingly been scrapped.

"Alarming disparities continue to exist in our country between First Nations Peoples and non-First Nations people.

"Once again, First Nations Peoples are having the rug ripped out from under them," Mr Burke said.

The decision is at odds with the recommendations in a report published last year by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), which called on governments to recognise the devastating impacts of systemic racism on First Nations Peoples and take urgent action to address it.

The AHRC report noted truth-telling, education about historical impacts and a commitment to self-determination is critical to dismantling racism against First Nations Australians.

Mr Burke said the forced cancellation of the Northern Territory's Treaty process would prevent better outcomes of First Nations Peoples and erode efforts to close the gap.

"We urge the NT government to reconsider its decision and do the right thing by reestablishing the Treaty process," he said.

ENDS

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The Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) represents more than 17,000 teachers, school support staff, principals, early childhood education and VET and RTO employees across Queensland and the Northern Territory.
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