



CLC calls for independent review into systemic racism in the NT police

The Central Land Council's executive committee has called for the NT Anti-Discrimination Commissioner to review systemic racism in the NT police.

Meeting for the first time since the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) into the conduct of police officers released its report, the eleven elected members said the report does not reflect Aboriginal people's experiences of racism in the NT police.

Mr Williams said it is time for an independent review because the ICAC investigation failed to address community concerns about systemic racism within the police.

"There is no Aboriginal Territorian alive who has not witnessed or experienced racist acts by the police," CLC chair Warren Williams said.

"We need a truly independent review that does not cast doubt on our lived experience."

"I stand with Northern Land Council chair Matthew Ryan who said that 'things can only improve if we start with truth telling'," he said.

"Truth-telling is the first step towards an anti-racist system."

The CLC executive wants the NT government to resource the commissioner to carry out the independent review.

It acknowledged the NT Police Commissioner's apology to Aboriginal people for the past wrongs and harms done by the police and welcomed the appointment of Leanne Liddle to drive internal reform.

"It's a step forward, but it's not enough," Mr Williams said. "Actions speak louder than words and appointments.

"We know police officers in our communities are under stress because they lack resources, but denying that racism exists among their colleagues hurts everyone.

"It ignores our lived experiences and it means police officers face no pressure to change their attitudes and behaviour."

The call echoes other Aboriginal leaders who want the government to implement priority reform 3 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, namely to change how governments operate by identifying and eliminating racism.

The Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the NT, of which the CLC is a member, requested an independent review of the NT police that addresses systemic racism in June.

5 December 2024