



"WE ARE POWERFUL DECISION-MAKERS"

OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM VALERIE NAPALJARRI MARTIN
DEPUTY-CHAIR OF THE PARUMPURRU SELECT COMMITTEE

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the Larrakia Nation, past and present. For being here on their land and for the incredible support they have given us, thank you. I make this statement on behalf of the following family groups; Nelson Michael, Kelly, Sims, Granites, Wilson, Martin, Hudson, Morris, Ross, Wayne, Lechleitner, Jones, Fisher, Butcher, Kantawara, Tilmouth, Daniels, Gallagher, Turner and Tex families.

There is no justice in the kardiya system. We are feeling so empty that our beloved young fella has been taken away from us. Nothing can bring him back. We have been devastated by this injustice and the court has not fulfilled its responsibility to hold Rolfe accountable for what he has done. The court system has not recognised our needs as Warlpiri people. There has been no respect for our customary law or our cultural ways of dealing with when somebody kills another person. We know how to deal with it. We are the First Nations peoples but we are still being disrespected and ignored. We are all so full of anger and grief. It is a racist system.

Our spirit may be broken but we are powerful decision-makers. We, as the Warlpiri Nation, are deadset against the weapons that are nowadays being used against our people by police. It must stop. We demand an end to guns in our communities. Look at what happened during the trial? A young fella, the same age as Kumanjayi, was shot at six times in Palmerston by police!



The police have no respect at all. They were confident to shoot because look at what happened to Rolfe after he shot and killed a young man? He was on bail for over two years, on full pay from the NT Police, being treated like a hero. It is disgusting.

We have every right to speak and to say this must stop. Do not silence us. I am an Elder who has worked with the law for thirty odd years. I am familiar with the sentences that are being handed down to our people, especially our young people today who are being convicted for the most minor things. The system traps our young people in youth detention and then in jails. The Elders and the community know what to do. We are trying to help our young people but we need more support to keep our young people out of the system.

Listen to us. We are all connected in this country, we should not be divided by racism but we are. We must have clear communication and work towards the future for our next generation. We don't want guns in community. We want to increase support for families and young ones. We want to work with yapa controlled support services. Everything must be yapa controlled. We need control back in our community so we can deal with the problems that are there. The biggest problem we have is racism in the police and racism in the court system and racism kills. Racism killed Kumanjayi Walker. We are the First Nations of Australia and we are proud people. We come from powerful lineages and we must be respected at all costs.