For the Northern Territory 2016, is the year of two big anniversaries: the 50th anniversary of the Wave Hill walk-off and the 40th anniversary of the Commonwealth Parliament’s passing the Northern Territory Aboriginal Land Rights Act. Next year will also mark the 10th anniversary of the Commonwealth’s Northern Territory Emergency Response – the Intervention.

What benefits have government policies delivered to Indigenous peoples over those decades? How would Nugget Coombs rate the quality of advice and programs that have emanated from government bureaucracies, NGOs and powerful individuals, as they have applied to Indigenous affairs?

The passage of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act remains its acme. Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory have been so distracted gaining, then defending, their rights that they simply have not secured their future. Developing the North is a hollow mantra without real inclusion of Indigenous peoples; the need for them to be consulted is ignored and self-management continues to elude them.

Closing the Gap targets remain unmet. In the Northern Territory, social determinants of health for Aboriginal people are stagnant while the rates of imprisonment are ever increasing. The scandalous treatment of Aboriginal juveniles by the Northern Territory's justice system has led to a Royal Commission; at least its appointment will, to the relief of the Aboriginal population, help dispel for a long time the possibility of Statehood.

The failure of public policies in the Northern Territory leads only to the conclusion that Aboriginal people themselves must seize the agenda for change, in order to achieve social and economic development on their own terms for themselves and for the nation.

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Speaker
Joe Morrison
Chief Executive Officer,
Northern Land Council

Location
Mal Nairn Auditorium
Building Red 7, Casuarina campus
Charles Darwin University, Darwin, NT

Refreshments from 6.15pm,
lecture begins at 7pm

Registration required
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