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PEOPLE IN NEW SOUTH WALES THROUGH  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE

# media release

NEW SOUTH WALES ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

## **Attitude to treatment of Aboriginal man was appalling**

18 May, 2010.

The fact that NT Police felt it appropriate to use boots - or perhaps a kick - to move an Aboriginal man who had collapsed at a Darwin function was appalling and unacceptable, the Chairwoman of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Bev Manton said today.

It was totally unacceptable for Police to think it appropriate to use their boots to move the man.

Chairwoman Manton was commenting on the report of this incident, in Darwin at the weekend, by eminent Australian academic Germaine Greer who was in Darwin to appear at the NT Writers' Festival.

Ms Greer told a panel that she was disgusted at the way Territory Police officers treated an Aboriginal man who had collapsed at the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT on Saturday afternoon.

When police arrived a police officer pushed the man with his boot than pushed him again, rolling him over.

“In other parts of the world it would have been called a kick. What if he'd had a stroke? What if he had epilepsy? Would he get kicked just the same,” Ms Greer said.

The NT's Police Commissioner, John Mc Roberts, has since defended the actions of the officer saying he had viewed vision of the incident and the officer had used his foot very light to tap the man on the shoulder in an attempt to wake him up or to get some response from him.

“No one had helped the man before police arrived,” Commissioner Mc Roberts added.

Ms Manton said the Commissioner's explanation missed the point.

“It was inappropriate police behaviour whoever one believes about the amount of force used.

“I agree with Ms Greer’s concerns. Too often it seems mistreatment of Aboriginal people is acceptable. This is mistreatment. It should be condemned.

We are talking about a human being, with human rights and citizenship rights in this country, Australia!

“People, no matter who they are, deserve to be treated with greater care and caution.

“A paramedic, not knowing what had happened, would act with appropriate caution and concern. They would most certainly not use their boots to roll a man over.

“Police should do the same.

“No doubt police rules and regulations would condemn this type of response. They should enforce them.

“The same goes for police anywhere”.

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