



16 October 2014

Committee Secretary  
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Dear Secretary,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the 'Inquiry into the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2012 and related legislation'.

ACOSS is a national voice for people affected by poverty, disadvantage and inequality. Our vision is for a fair, inclusive and sustainable Australia where all individuals and communities have the opportunities and resources they need to participate in and benefit from social and economic life. We have made this submission jointly with our Northern Territory affiliate, NTCOSS, the peak body for community services in the Northern Territory. Our organisations share an active interest in, and high level of concern about, Federal Government policies affecting Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Due to capacity constraints, we are unable to provide detailed comment in relation to all aspects of the *Stronger Futures* legislation, but have provided the attached summary of evidence on the impact of compulsory income management policies in the NT and elsewhere for the Committee's information.

We remain very concerned that compulsory income management is a crude, stigmatising and ineffective policy response to a range of complex social problems. We are also concerned that, despite amendments to achieve compliance with the *Racial Discrimination Act*, the policy's design and implementation ensures its disproportionate impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I trust that the Committee will give these serious human rights issues the consideration they deserve and I hope that the Committee's findings can assist to inform a more respectful, empowering and effective policy response to the complex challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Cassandra Goldie  
CEO, ACOSS

Janine Sims  
Acting Executive Director  
NTCOSS