

To: The Senate Committee on Stronger Futures

I understand there is legislation under the title category *Stronger Futures* relating to the NT Intervention that is presently 'in the melting pot', and i wish to pass on to the Senate Committee some of my thoughts about the flavour of what seems to be intended. I hope my submission is within the designated time.

Firstly, the appropriateness of the "E" in the 'NTER' has long expired. This exercise was meant to bring to a halt, a state of affairs that was presented as being in need of extreme action, and the urgency of that action was put to a perplexed population as most essential. In the dying months of the previous government, the swift and drastic action of The Intervention was forced upon an unprepared people, who were under the delusion - like the rest of us - that they had fairly certain protections under the Racial Discrimination Act. To suspend that Act, in my view, was an outrageous step, but the inclusion of the word "emergency" (in NTER) tended to alleviate the affront. But with the passage of time, the word 'emergency' has been proven a phoney, and to countenance an extension of the action under that same heading is obscene.....and, for its duration to be prolonged by a decade, is a move that I frankly find objectionable.

I see cynicism in havng employed such a false and potentially disarming title to begin with, as tantamount to the now-discredited Iraq-war rhetoric. I am always suspicious of power-holders' motives when they try and 'respectablise' a policy's implementation with contrived and diversionary posturing. And the too-clever-by-half use "Stronger Futures", strikes me as a damn good example of both.

To me, there is a strong element of hypocrisy in the proposed enabling Bill for the NTER's continuation, for it to operate under the euphemistic name of "*Stronger Futures*".

Dear Senate Committee Members, in all fairness, the original Act's time is up. It surely needs to be phased down (and out), **not** reinforced.

The crucial issue of Homeland retention as a concept, needs to be supported to the utmost, according to what those who want to exist in that mode, require. Even arguing selfishly on behalf of my children & grand-kids, those indigenous folk in particular are the main ones who have a chance of demonstrating a survival paradigm which uniquely accompanies minimally attenuated aboriginal culture. The whole world needs to be guided by these precious folk .... their way of life has far higher strategic usefulness to a planet that is staring ecological disaster in the face, than anything bureaucracies can, or so far have, come up with.

Whatever you do, lay off the policy track (unwritten of course) of getting rid of them; and withdrawal of this *Stronger Futures* legislation is, for now, an essential place to start. 'Forcing' them off those lands, by often subtle and indirect means, or creating impediments to some returning, would be the saddest legacy this government could bestow on future generations of all ethnic make-ups. And I regard 'town camps' in the same way.

Tenure must not be threatened; appealing though it may be to development interests - private or state, or even at the behest of some 'well-intentioned' NGO.

The punitive nature of many of Stronger Futures' inclusions is also unconscionable. For example, I have a

grand-daughter in High School near Campbelltown (outer Sydney), where she tells me the average non-attendance score for a term would well in excess of 5 days; but the consequences are nil! I have much difficulty in not looking upon this selective non-educational-measures sort of thing, as covertly assimilationist - if not borderline racist.

The liquor and community stores aspects are further points where I think ultimate harm is going to be done by the present - and thus far intended - legislation.

I appeal to you to engage in a rethink of this whole set of proposals, and encourage an across-parliament approach of respect for a people we don't understand, who've been colossally injured by so-called *settlers* in the first place, and to whom an Apology has supposedly been made, but upon whom I,m afraid a 'business-as-usual' bludgeon is in danger of being used.

Please don't allow the "stronger" come to mean the Commonwealth has strengthened its grip more than ever on our aboriginal community,

Anthony Martin