

EMAIL SUBJECT: Submission re Stronger Futures

To the Senate Community Affairs Committee
Regarding the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011

From Lynden Baxter

I wish to make a submission to the Committee to express my opposition to the proposed Stronger Futures legislation.

As a white person living in regional Victoria you may reasonably question what I could know, or why I would care about the application of a policy in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

However I think this is an issue that all Australians should care about, touching as it does on fundamental human rights and what I consider our national shared values of equality for all and of supporting those in our communities who for whatever reasons may need a hand.

I understand the issues the intervention sought to address are complex and that divergent opinions existed within Aboriginal communities about the intervention when it was first introduced .

As a concerned Australian I have sought to educate myself on the issues and the potential solutions; I have read widely, I've talked about the issues with Aboriginal friends, looked to the opinions of Aboriginal communities expressed during the Stronger Futures consultations and when visiting Alice Springs talked to people impacted by the policy.

My conclusion is that the proposed legislation will lead to further disempowerment of Aboriginal people and that in order to redress the complex issues facing Aboriginal communities government must instead seek to work with communities, to listen to what they have to say and to work in ways that respect and support community empowerment.

I ask that the legislation be withdrawn.

Thank you.

Lynden Baxter