

To the Senate Community Affairs Committee

RE: Stronger Futures in the NT Bill 2011

From Kristal Yee
Director,

I wish to express my opposition to the proposed Stronger Futures legislation. This legislation, along with many other acts, bills and laws does not reflect the views of the *majority* of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders involved.

I am deeply concerned by the inequality of this and other legislation which implies that Indigenous people are incapable of making decisions for themselves. Perhaps not all are, but the majority are and this is no different to any other demographic. This proposed legislation tramples the will and self-respect of people and contravenes the basic premises of human rights and human decency.

I am strongly motivated to speak up because, even in urban areas, there is much legislation that works to the disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. We live in a country with two (or more) sets of rules. One of them continuously makes life more difficult for Aboriginal people - by keeping them busy attempting to abide by the rules set for them, by misrepresenting them and by not allowing them any voice.

An Aboriginal friend of mine has picked me up for including her when I refer to 'them'. But Aboriginal people are 'them'. The vast majority of Australians 'other' Aboriginal people, some far more maliciously than

others who have no ill-intent but live in ignorance of how the 'Aboriginal' situation is managed. Of course not all Aboriginal people are perfect but what group of people constitutes only the perfect? It greatly upsets me that the word, 'situation' refers to some of my closest friends who are law-abiding, compassionate, intelligent, hard-working, kind and loyal.

Another friend wrote to me today:

"Why can't we be treated like equals??? I'm a good bloke, my kids are great kids, [wife] is also great. We contribute positively to our families and communities, but still get treated like second class citizens in our own country.

I will continue to walk tall in my country and role model to my family, friends and society that I am a human being that deserves the human rights, social justice and the freedom to be proud of my Aboriginal History, Culture and spirit that has survived in this place long before the Pyramids of Egypt were built and long before Jesus Christ walked this earth.

Colonisation has done alot of damage to the physical being of us as Aboriginal people, but they will never kill the Aboriginal Spirit in us.

Black Proud and Deadly [friend's name]. "

Please, begin interacting with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people in ways that allow them to maintain their dignity, display their integrity, practise and strengthen their culture, and live on their lands in a co-operative and mutually satisfactory manner.

Yours sincerely
Kristal Yee