

Dear Senators,

I send this to you, as the *Stronger Futures and two related bills inquiry* is to commence.

I note most submissions at the site strongly oppose the legislation. The NT Elders / leaders (Submission 40) outright rejects the proposed legislation. It is wrong and heartbreaking what has happened under the Intervention. The Intervention is racist. I cannot support this legislation as it continues the same policies.

Please look at submission 29 - Elders and Community of Ramingining-see what they have to say as a community affected by the measures- there are gross injustices here. See what the Elders and community representatives are asking. Why have their concerns also NOT been reflected in the Minister's Stronger Futures paper? Aboriginal people have solutions. It is these that need to be supported.

This legislation comes with a ten year sunset clause with no review until 7 years- this is moving to a permanent arrangement. This is not the idea of special measures. And, there was no prior consent in the first place.

The Further winding back of land rights is a concern. 'Community living areas' and 'town camps'. The former take up many areas. We know the NT is mineral rich. It looks like current obstacles can be simply removed by Government under this process and with very little, if any respect. This does not fit in with what the minister said when the legislation was introduced.

I ask you to consider this carefully and remember the very close connection and two way responsibility Aboriginal people have with their lands. This has been given little attention to date. Land reform section almost reads as if it doesn't matter whether/ not relevant [all Aboriginal] owners are consulted or not? And, they need to read public notices first. Aboriginal people can then request to be consulted. This is disgraceful. Will these be notices be translated into the local Indigenous language? How far will they be placed from their remote homelands? Will notices reach all relevant owners? Surely there should be a duty to consult and negotiate with all relevant land owners. There is no relationship building in this. In November the minister spoke of stronger relationship yet the legislation and this behavior does not reflect,

"A stronger future, grounded in a stronger relationship between government and Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

A relationship built on respect for Australia's first peoples, for their custodianship of the land, for their culture and for their ongoing contributions to our shared nation.

This is a respect that is about much more than sentiment. It is about the approach we take to our work, and the approach we take to working together." Jenny Macklin November 2011

I am hoping this enquiry will give lengthy and detailed consideration especially to the concerns of Aboriginal living in the prescribed communities of the N.T. Please refer

submissions

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac_ctte/strong_future_nt_11/submissions.htm

The legislation should be withdrawn and there should be a change in policy directions. This change needs to be made 'with' Aboriginal people. Cultural integrity must be allowed. We must respect their right to their live, work and be educated in their own lands and the right to control over their lives.

Regards

Bernadette McPhee