

**From:** Peter Herborn

**Sent:** Monday, 13 August 2007 10:06 AM

**To:** Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)

**Subject:** NT Indigenous Communities

Dear Ms Morris

Like most Australians I agree with the need to take effective and sustained action to address child abuse and contributing social problems in NT indigenous communities. However I am appalled by the current approach taken by the Commonwealth government. A solution cannot be imposed on these communities. The government must listen to what the leaders in these communities have to say and they must become part of a long term solution.

I am also deeply concerned by the unseemly haste with which the legislation is being pushed through Parliament. I am deeply suspicious of the real motives for the changes in land management. I do not see the relevance and urgency of the changes.

In my view, as a social scientist and urban planner, the populist authoritarian approach adopted by the government will not work. I think that it will unfortunately find its way into the literature as a failed social experiment. A case study of how to make a bad situation worse.

I urge the government to take time to confer with all the stakeholders and to address the basic needs of these communities for decent housing, employment, education and health care. Long term sustainable solutions should not be compromised for short-term political gain.

Yours faithfully

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