

**From:** Nick McClean

**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 August 2007 11:58 AM

**To:** Abetz, Eric (Senator); Adams, Judith (Senator); Allison, Lyn (Senator); Barnett, Guy (Senator); Bartlett, Andrew (Senator); Bernardi, Cory (Senator); Birmingham, Simon (Senator); Bishop, Mark (Senator); Boswell, Ron (Senator); Boyce, Sue (Senator); Brandis, George (Senator); Brown, Carol (Senator); Calvert, Paul (Senator); Campbell, George (Senator)

**Subject:** Northern Territory Intervention Bill

Dear Parliamentarians,

I am writing to you to urge you strongly to oppose the passage of the Federal Governments Bill seeking to intervene in the lives of the Indigenous people of the Northern Territory.

As someone who has lived and worked alongside Aboriginal people in both the NT and NSW dealing with issues of family separation and substance abuse, I am extremely concerned that the measures being proposed under this new legislation will in fact only cause more damage to those who Senator Brough and Prime Minister Howard claim to be acting in the interests of.

Senator Brough has himself conceded that the bill contravenes the Racial Discrimination Act, and that it does not implement any of the recommendations of the Little Children Are Sacred Report, or any of the other numerous reports that have been produced in the last 15 years in relation to issues of child abuse in Aboriginal communities, beyond the most general of statements, 'that something should be done'. It is clear that this is common ground on which we all stand, black or white - exactly what is to be done is a matter that must be approached with sensitivity and respect.

I would urge all of you to rise above the politics of this issue and act in the interests of those who need your support now more than ever - those who are trapped within cycles of abuse and violence that were not of their own making.

I understand the Senators desire to act quickly and decisively, but I would remind you all that the language of 'protection' that he uses so consistently has a long history in these issues - in NSW it was the Aborigines Protection Board who for more than 60 years separated Aboriginal children from their families and forcibly dislocated entire communities in their efforts to act 'in the interests ' of their wards. These actions were against the wishes of Aboriginal people in NSW, and the effects of this period continue to manifest today in the very cycles of abuse and violence that the Senator wishes to address.

Please consider this when making your decision.

Sincerely

Nicholas McClean