

Rosslyn Small

10 August 2007

Jackie Morris  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACT 2600

Dear Madam

RE: INQUIRY INTO THE NORTHERN TERRITORY NATIONAL EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE BILL 2007 & RELATED BILLS

When I first saw the news reports about the Federal Government's intervention into Aboriginal communities, my first thought was this might do a little good, but will probably soon come to be regarded as a disastrous blunder.

Surely with all our knowledge, education and resources, we have learnt that you can't do things to people for their own good; you need to draw people together to discuss the best way to achieve improvements and then apply the time and the money and the right people to make it all work.

I consider that the Federal Government has left this all too late and are rushing it through now in the lead up to an election to prove that they can take action. But what action? It looks more like an attack on Aboriginal land rights and the permit system, than a genuine attempt to help such disadvantaged communities.

I ask your Committee to seek to extend the time for the Inquiry to allow for proper consideration of the consequences of these Bills. I've read the media statement from the Leaders of the Mutitjulu community who raise very serious concerns about the intervention over two years ago, and how they are worse off now. I believe this story will now be repeated in the other NT communities with the current approach.

Please think about how you can use the Federal Government resources to make the lives of Aboriginal people better, not how you can simply exercise power and then walk away, blaming the people yet again for what you have done to them.

Yours sincerely

Rosslyn Small