

From: Alice Foley

Sent: Thursday, 9 August 2007 6:04 PM

To: Bernardi, Cory (Senator); Birmingham, Simon (Senator); Chapman, Grant (Senator); Ferguson, Alan (Senator); Fisher, Mary Jo (Senator); Hurley, Annette (Senator); Kirk, Linda (Senator); McEwen, Anne (Senator); Minchin, Nick (Senator); Stott Despoja, Natasha (Senator); Wong, Penelope (Senator); Wortley, Dana (Senator); Abetz, Eric (Senator); Barnett, Guy (Senator); Brown, Bob (Senator); Brown, Carol (Senator); Calvert, Paul (Senator); Colbeck, Richard (Senator); Milne, Christine (Senator); O'Brien, Kerry (Senator); Parry, Stephen (Senator); Polley, Helen (Senator); Sherry, Nick (Senator); Watson, John (Senator)

Subject: Urgent plea for Aboriginal rights!

Dear Senator,

Tomorrow you will debate the legislation concerning the Federal Government's intervention in Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory.

The two points which concern me greatly are:

Temporary take-over of Control of land bestowed under the Aboriginal Rights Act;

Removing the right of Aboriginal people to control permits to enter their Land.

The first is of great concern to me because of the fear that I have that Aboriginal people will lose control of their lands permanently. This fear is based on the fact that it has happened to them time and time again since colonisation and on the fact that the taking of land has no benefit in protecting children.

The second has taken away a control from communities which enabled them to keep out of their lands people causing harm to their communities, a fact that is supported by the Northern Territory Police Association.

Neither of these actions would have been considered if there had been **real dialogue with the Aboriginal people on their land**, instead of making decisions for them from afar.

No citizen of Australia should be treated in such a demeaning way, especially as many of these people have been asking for decades for the kind of help which they know will overcome their difficulties: employment, education, access to medical and psychological help and adequate housing.

We have become rich by using and also exploiting the land which the Aboriginal people cared for over thousands of years, with little regard for what was happening to them as we grew prosperous. It is disgraceful to further ignore their dignity and their rights. I trust that you will use your position to make a decision of which we can be proud.

Yours faithfully,

Sister Alice Foley,
Carmelite Monastery