

From: Annette Jackson

Sent: Friday, 10 August 2007 1:00 AM

To: Abetz, Eric (Senator); Adams, Judith (Senator); Joyce, Barnaby (Senator); Birmingham, Simon (Senator); Trood, Russell (Senator); Parry, Stephen (Senator); Sterle, Glenn (Senator); Troeth, Judith (Senator); Nettle, Kerry (Senator); Evans, Chris (Senator); Ferguson, Alan (Senator); Hutchins, Steve (Senator); Johnston, David (Senator); Faulkner, John (Senator); Hogg, John (Senator); Carr, Kim (Senator); Wong, Penelope (Senator); senator.campbell@aph.gov.au; Fifield, Mitchell (Senator); Chapman, Grant (Senator); Fierravanti-Wells, Concetta (Senator); Colbeck, Richard (Senator); Cormann, Mathias (Senator); Crossin, Patricia (Senator); Wortley, Dana (Senator); Ray, Robert (Senator); Scullion, Nigel (Senator); Stephens, Ursula (Senator); Allison, Lyn (Senator); Barnett, Guy (Senator); senator.bernard@aph.gov.au; Humphries, Gary (Senator); Eggleston, Alan (Senator); Patterson, Kay (Senator); Ronaldson, Michael (Senator); Siewert, Rachel (Senator); Fisher, Mary Jo (Senator); Hurley, Annette (Senator); Conroy, Stephen (Senator); Coonan, Helen (Senator); Webber, Ruth (Senator); Watson, John (Senator); O'Brien, Kerry (Senator); Polley, Helen (Senator); Sherry, Nick (Senator)

Subject: For your urgent consideration regarding the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Bill

Hello

My name is Annette Jackson and I'm writing as a private citizen who is appalled at the government's bill regarding the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Bill. I am equally appalled that the Labour Party has endorsed this bill and supported its passing in the lower house, with only an apparent half-hearted attempt to ask for some amendments.

I have worked in the field of child protection for the past 23 years in various roles including departmental child protection management, family reunification, residential care, therapeutic services in response to child abuse and with Indigenous services. Everything I have learnt over these years tells me that this bill is the antithesis of what is needed. This is not an emergency, but a disaster that has been in the making for decades if not longer. It therefore requires a planned and consultative process, not a grab bag attempt to look good in the face of such clear human rights violations. Unfortunately we have learnt time and time again that hasty, unthought through reactions can do significantly more harm than good. These children and their communities have suffered too much and too long to negate this opportunity to harness respectful responses to achieve long lasting and effective change.

I see nothing in this bill that will actually provide real protection for Aboriginal children from abuse. It is inconsistent with the recommendations of the Little Children are Sacred report. The government's bill has cherry picked from this report and others, those aspects which are relative easy and showy. Consultation is not an avoidance of dealing directly with the issue. Avoiding consultation on the other hand is a denial of what is ultimately required...i.e. an empowerment of the people and building on their interest and desire to protect their children. Permits under the current Act allow people to enter their land if exercising a statutory function. The Northern Territory's long-term inaction on behalf of Aboriginal children has been an act of cowardice and lack of creativity. This does not excuse the alternate jack boot response represented in this bill

I would strongly request that you take a position of honour regarding this bill and vote against the bill. This does not mean that inaction should ensue. But that real and courageous consultation occur with the Aboriginal communities, the Secretariat for National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) and Aboriginal professionals in the fields of medicine, psychology and social work.

To provide context for this email, I have never written to a member of parliament of any party before.... But I do not want to be one of those people who stands idly by why harm is done in the name of good.

Annette Jackson