

Respect and trust – comment on the *Northern Territory National Emergency Response Bills*

It would indeed be churlish to oppose responsible measures to provide safer and more sustainable communities for Northern Territory Aboriginals.

But I know from my own experience and the accounts of many others that Aboriginal leadership is based on levels of respect and trust that are not well understood by those of us imbued with the preconceptions of 'the dominant culture'.

Having recently returned from time in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, I have seen examples of both the most positive and the least desirable aspects of Indigenous community. Regrettably, evidence of dysfunction seems always to attract more attention than the highly functional, proudly self-reliant initiatives and enterprises that abound.

I submit that many of us are bemused by the unseemly haste with which the Government has introduced complex, wide-ranging legislation and regulation that will have impacts and consequences that cannot yet be fully recognised, let alone assessed.

Why not proceed down the path defined by the *Little Children Are Sacred* report? The report has been widely accepted as representing 'distilled wisdom' that demands respectful consideration.

David Hall