

From: Don McArthur

Sent: Friday, 10 August 2007 12:30 PM

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, Bob (Senator); Brown, Carol (Senator); Calvert, Paul (Senator); Campbell, George (Senator); Carr, Kim (Senator); Chapman, Grant (Senator); Colbeck, Richard (Senator); Conroy, Stephen (Senator); Coonan, Helen (Senator); Cormann, Mathias (Senator); Crossin, Patricia (Senator); Eggleston, Alan (Senator); Ellison, Christopher (Senator); Evans, Chris (Senator); Faulkner, John (Senator); Ferguson, Alan (Senator); Fielding, Steve (Senator); Fierravanti-Wells, Concetta (Senator); Fifield, Mitchell (Senator); Fisher, Mary Jo (Senator); Forshaw, Michael (Senator); Heffernan, Bill (Senator); Hogg, John (Senator)
Cc: Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)

Subject: NT laws and addressing child abuse

Dear Senators and Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

I write to express my concern about

- * the need for a response which takes the recommendations of the "Little Children are Sacred" report seriously
- * the haste with which these Bills have been introduced
- * the lack of time for consideration of the impact of the proposed laws
- * the lack of consultation with Indigenous communities

In these circumstances I urge you to

- * ensure that the Bills are reviewed properly on their merits:
a key standard for this should be the extent to which they are consistent with and take account of the recommendations of the "Little Children are Sacred" report
- * ensure that any Bills passed are consistent with the Racial Discrimination Act
- * withdraw changes to the permit system and land rights
- * ensure that - given the lack of consultation with Indigenous communities and the high level of risk that hastily-passed legislation could be to the detriment of the people it affects - any legislation is reviewed after a period of 12 months and independently monitored on an ongoing basis

In deciding on your response I urge you to give full consideration to the Little Children are Sacred recommendations and to concerns being expressed by the people in communities which are affected such as

Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care
<http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/SNAICCresponseNTJune07.html>

Resolution passed at 2007 Garma Cultural Festival in NT
<http://www.nit.com.au/breakingNews/story.aspx?id=12231>

These views deserve to be weighed fully.

Yours sincerely

Don McArthur