

Raymond Montalban

11th March 2011

Re: Power of veto over Australian Territories

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a concerned citizen of Australia over the rights of the states and – in this case – territories to legislate and execute as per their democratically elected function. I specifically refer to the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory in this letter.

As both of these Territories have their entire legislature elected by the people, they are charged with the responsibility to enact and execute laws for their particular part of Australia. The electorates of both of these Territories expect their Members of Parliament to be able to govern over their areas of jurisdiction. In short, they expect their governments to work in roughly the same way as the States do.

I understand that there are constitutional and legal limitations to this.

However, with the power of veto potentially in one person's hands, as is the current case, the Territories are always beholden to the Federal government with no real say in what occurs on the ground. The Territories can't legislate effective change in the same way as a State can. On the ground State and Territorial service delivery does not need intervention by another level of government, adding additional costs and time to deliverables which should be simple to deploy, such as a marriage, or a local road, or a new school.

The closer a government is to its people, the better it can be placed to deliver outcomes the electorate desires or needs in a faster fashion. For example, on the issue of civil unions, the ACT has already acted on the wishes of its electorate in allowing this to occur, but because of the political interference of a few, both attempts at allowing civil unions were vetoed until amendments were made, making civil unions more symbolic than practical.

Regards,

Raymond George Montalban