

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a personal submission opposing the Stronger Futures Bill 2011 and related legislation.

I believe that extending the discriminatory and punitive Northern Territory Emergency Response is a violation of basic human rights and will continue to be disempowering for the affected Aboriginal communities.

Communities having control over their lives is a requirement of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the proposed extension of the NTER is in direct violation. Documents from The Australian Bureau of Statistics and Child Protection Australia show since 2007 Aboriginal incarceration is rapidly on the rise and that more and more children have been taken from their families. A frightening reality. Not to mention the Closing the Gap report that stated self-harm and suicide attempts have more than doubled.

Communities need to have the right to control their own people. Furthermore, the people need the right to control their own finances, schooling, land and stores. To threaten people with gaol time for being in possession of alcohol or to cut social security entitlements if children miss school is blatant manipulation and against the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. To continue to wield such dominance over the communities will only catalyse the destruction of the targeted people and their culture.

Punitive measures only increase suffering. They are targeted at Aboriginal people, many of whom are already living below the poverty line in under resourced communities. Such punitive measures do not work and are

expensive. Instead government funds should be redirected into programs that are designed, owned and directed by Aboriginal people.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission. I look forward to receiving your written response at the address below.

Hayley Bruce-Gordon