

Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Committee Inquiry into Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011 and two related bills

We are Aboriginal people living under the intervention laws in the Northern Territory. We have had the intervention for 4½ years. It has not made our lives better. It is making things worse. The intervention was supposed to be about making lives safer for women and children but this is not happening.

The government did not listen when we had a meeting at the Crowne Plaza in Alice Springs. They called it Stronger Futures consultation and said they didn't want to talk about the intervention.

Aboriginal people at that meeting had good ideas about what needed to be done to improve education and deal with the issues we face every day.

They didn't ask for people's welfare money to be stopped. They didn't ask for the land laws to change so the land can be chopped up.

People at the meeting accepted that alcohol is a problem but they asked for support for communities to deal with their problems. They asked for control over their communities.

Aboriginal people are tired of talking and not being listened to.

We want this intervention to stop and we don't want another intervention for ten years.

We want to be free from these laws. We don't want to be under laws different from other people.

If the government really wants to help us, stop treating us differently. Talk to us. Work with us. Respect our culture. Respect us as Aboriginal people, the caretakers of this land.

GIVE US OUR LIVES BACK!

Maxine Carlton and Donald Kunoth,

31st January 2012.