

To the Senate Community Affairs Committee
Regarding the Stronger Futures in NT Bill 2011.

I have been working in the Northern Territory in Indigenous Education for the past three years and strongly oppose the Stronger Futures Bill. The 'punishment and reward' system the government proposes to implement (and in some measures has already implemented) in education is again a system of control with no consideration of the barriers that Indigenous people have to face when it comes to engaging successfully with formal education.

In addition, I have spoken to Indigenous elders who have expressed the shame felt when signs such as the 'no alcohol and no pornography' one have been placed in front of the communities, not even in a language that community members use in everyday life. These issues impact all of society so why not 'target' the mainstream culture in these areas rather than focussing on a particular people group?

Finally, after five years of the intervention, a comment I heard recently from someone who has lived and worked in community for many years suggested things in that particular community are as bad as it's ever been in regards to dysfunction. With the Stronger Futures legislation not doing anything to address the 'root' cause of so many of these issues, I see no reason why with it's implementation, things will get better.

Please reconsider this Bill and start working towards empowering Indigenous people to take back control of their own destiny.

Yours Sincerely,
Lyndal Walker