

1st February, 2012

Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Committee Members,

I am appalled by the proposed 'Stronger Futures Legislation'. This will extend many parts of the nationally and internationally-criticised 'Intervention', which in a bid to require Aboriginal people to sign over 40 year leases of their land in exchange for basic services, dishevelled all kinds of human rights laws and standards.

Is our nation so arrogant that we are incapable of assisting our indigenous population without taking ownership of their land, applying additional restrictions and enforcing racially-discriminatory regulations?

My experience as a Youth Worker has shown me that punitive punishment does not lead to positive outcomes. It is only through getting alongside somebody, with the aim of empowering them to come up with solutions to help themselves, that it is possible to see truly positive outcomes.

If the government was genuinely concerned about child sexual abuse, health conditions and school attendance rates, there would be no need to apply punitive measures to solve the problem. Instead, we would engage in genuine consultation that carries no political or economic agenda, we would work to empower the aboriginal people through combined consultative community development.

The government is fully capable of providing genuine consultation and simply getting alongside the aboriginal people and assisting them to come up with effective measures that work towards improving the situation.

The fact that there has been no tangible improvement only highlights the question growing in the public eye as to whether the Intervention and Stronger Futures is simply a 'Trojan Horse' for the government to take control of aboriginal lands for the purposes of mining.

Sincerely,

Jesse Mitchell