

To the Senate Community Affairs Committee,

I am dismayed to learn that your Government has not ceased the measures implemented by the Howard Government NT Emergency Intervention in 2007.

A sophisticated, nuanced and local approach is required when attempting to navigate issues with ANY community. This is especially so when seeking to address issues as serious as domestic violence and alcohol abuse.

Instead, the Howard Government adopted a crude, heavy handed and blanket approach and the result has been nothing short of devastating.

NT Aboriginal communities, particularly those on Homelands, have had to deal with the shame and impost of the Intervention in ways they should never had been.

Forced 5 year leases of Aboriginal land and quarantining of income (via the Basics card) are the measures of a blatantly self serving and paternalistic Government.

This may well describe the Howard Government, but it will ultimately transfer to your Government if this racist and unjust policy program continues to be funded and resourced.

No other Australians are force to lease their land to the Government in exchange for desperately needed housing stock. Nor do any other Australians have their finances controlled in such a way that they cannot access their own money for food items of their choosing.

The NT Intervention was the wrong course of action in 2007 and the implications of its ongoing program in 2010 are akin to apartheid.

The global community is tuning in on the situation in the Northern Territory on an ever increasing level. Many are drawing conclusions that the reasoning behind the Intervention had more to do with the wealth of natural resources in the Territory than the welfare of children.

I ask that the legislation be withdrawn and that an alternative policy is developed, based on genuine consultation, community empowerment, the respect of Aboriginal culture, lands and languages, and the fundamental right of Aboriginal people to be able to control their own lives.

Thank you.

Carrie White