

31st January 2012

The Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
P O Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra 2600

Reference: *Submission on the Stronger Futures Legislation Package :*
The Social Security Legislation Bill 2011,
The Stronger Future in the Northern Territory (Consequential and
Transitional Provisions) Bill 2011 and
The Stronger Future in the Northern Territory Bill 2011.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Standing Committee, as we have long been very concerned about the legislation.

Over a number of years we have been in contact with people who live and work in NT communities, with those who have studied the situations that have evolved, and have followed government actions and statements. We firmly believe the Intervention to be discriminatory, disrespectful and disempowering. It does not consider the rights of individuals or of communities because it is a broad brushed approach taken without adequate consultation and care. By its very nature it is disempowering so cannot be part of a stronger future if it is not built by and with the support of the communities themselves.

We respectfully submit that the Northern Territory Intervention and all the legislation which supports it not be renewed, and that submissions made on behalf of NT communities by Elders are heard and acted upon. The indigenous communities of the Northern Territory know what is needed to bring about change, as they live with the destruction to their communities and individual lives daily.

The ten years of the Intervention have not demonstrated any basis for the renewal of the actions, and we are aware alternative action plans have been presented by indigenous Australians and others. Any legislation which separates indigenous communities from the rest of the country to us is discriminatory and unlawful.

We hope that the government will show a real commitment by listening rather than instructing, so that we can begin to move forward together as a united community.

Sincerely,
Katherine Thirkell
On behalf of the Social Justice Committee
Williamstown Uniting Church Electra Street

