

To the Senate Community Affairs Committee regarding the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011.  
From Ruth Lipscombe

I wish to register my objection to the proposals being foistered upon the Aboriginal communities in the NT.

I worked in the Territory from 1965 to 1984, both in the Top End and the Centre. My time in the Top End was spent in Darwin, Kakadu, Galiwinku and short periods in most of the Communities and in many of the Outstations.

The Yolngu I met and worked with and for were perfectly capable of running their own lives and villages. I have been appalled at the changes some of my Aboriginal friends and co-workers have told me about.

John Howard's government started the rapid downgrading of Aborigines as competent citizens and sadly the present regime seems to be following his lead.

You visit the villages but you leave your 'listening ears' in Canberra or Darwin because the regulations you impose following these so-called consultations bears no resemblance to what the Yolngu tell me they have told you. This is taking mis-representation to an even higher level than Howard reached.

You are not dealing with a pack of backward children, they are resilient thinkers who have much to teach us about living and thriving in a land which has many challenges.

Please stop what you are doing and revisit the Communities with  
.an open mind

.a knowledge that the people you are speaking to know their capabilities and the context in which they live and work and YOU DO NOT!

.a willingness to listen to what the people tell you about the direction they are going in as long as they are not buried in OUR bureaucracy.

.the ability to listen to what the real damage to their Communities is being caused by pursuing John Howard's racist Intervention style policies, the new title does not change the intent one iota.

Ruth Lipscombe

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