

I am deeply concerned about the Stronger Futures legislation, where the current federal government and its supporters continue to rely on punitive measures as a cornerstone of Indigenous policy.

This is shameful. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the NT have identified the failures and injustice of Income Management and the NTER yet their voices and those of others who have seen what is happening on the ground are ignored. Any builder will tell you that it is a grave mistake to build on shaky foundations, yet the warnings have not been listened to.

Over and over again, I have heard the same stories from people who live on Communities in the NT, and people who travel to the Communities in the course of their work. These are the unheard voices. These are people who concur with government on the need for a strengths based approach, but who ask how this is achieved when rights and responsibilities are denied. These are people who understand the way grief and loss can wither and pain families and communities through generations and who recognise that taking away freedoms while building in layers of bureaucratic controls compounds this effect.

Stronger Futures is a misnomer for many Communities and families. Living under the 'management' of outsiders is never a position of strength.

We don't need any more fast and furious 'consultations', where the only apparent purpose is to shore up a government's position. We need truth and justice to prevail, and for the law makers to engage in long term respectful dialogue and thinking together.

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