

I wish to submit this summary as a migrant from **Kurdish** background a strong believer of **self-determination** and a concerned Australian citizen as a response to the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011.

I've had a chance to visit Alice Springs three months ago and would like to share some of my experiences with you.

According my experience Alice Springs is part of this country naturally however not part of this country under civil rights. I'll just try to explain my facts in two parts.

1- Social Life:

People who live in remote communities are the most caring people that I've met in Australia. The collective life style that they live in made me to rethink about our workaholic, boring, mortgage slaved, internet wasted and lonely lives in suburbs of Sydney. The collective life style makes one to feel that you are part of a very strong and ineradicable community. You laugh together; you cry together, you share everything that you or your communities have. (Therefore you may not need lots of services to provide personal support.) Everyone is a volunteer as part of the life style and thus nobody needs to establish volunteer or alike centres.

People are very proud of their heritage, their culture, their language and they succeed to keep most of these besides the 200+ years of 'western interventions'.

The art work there is unique and every camp has very talented artists that can benefit their own communities and the economy of Australia.

People have will and men power to be in the workforce however everywhere is full with laborers brought by building contractors from other states.

2- What's been happening in Alice Springs especially since the NT Intervention?

I visited few remote communities that were 300 km away from Alice Springs, therefore I've gone through the red dirt, red fire, and lots of racist signs that truly shocked me.

- Imagine a suburb that divided with prescribed area signs, one street can be labeled under this sign that can be read 'beware alcoholics and porno lovers' and the next suburb doesn't have that sign. Imagine their children playing together, going to school together, neighbors spending lots of time together and all of a sudden the sign comes in as a result of some statistics from some report no one knew where it came from. These signs are at the entrance of many remote communities and they are very discriminative and not acceptable labeling type signs.

- Imagine you are going to do your shopping and asked to queue in a separate one that everyone in the shop knows that you are using Basics Card and your income is managed as you did something 'wrong to either to your children or your wife , or you are a gambler or you are an alcoholic' . Imagine 50%-70% of your income's been quarantined on the Basics Card which allows you to buy 'vital items' You have no other cash as you spend it on filling your car with petrol to go to the nearest supermarket which is 100 km away, or you went to hospital which is 100 km away. Anyway now imagine you do not have any cash left and your 4 yrs old grand child wants you to buy ice-cream, or you need some moisturizing cream. Or you are a smoker and you run out cigarettes! You need to wait another 14 days and do not know if you had enough cash to be able to buy any of these. 94% of people on Income Management are Aboriginal.

- Imagine you have a closer shop that you can buy some vital items such as drinks, bread, etc. and you are not allowed to step in the shop, you are served from a little iron window (no no I am not talking about South Africa in Apartheid times, I am talking about a shopping place in Central Australia in 21st Century). Do you think that you can lodge a complaint about this? If you said 'yes' you are very naïf or trying to mislead me. Although UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Amnesty International urged Australia to reinstate the 'Racial Discrimination Act' act it's still suspended. And if NT Intervention will be extended for another decade I don't know how the harm is done around racism would be healed.

- I was extremely frustrated with the reducing hours of bi-lingual education from 4 hours to 1 hour. I was really annoyed with the requirement of signing 40 plus years land lease to get people's houses renovated. As a believer of local issues can be addressed locally I couldn't understand how 70+ Community Councils were amalgamated into 7 Shire Councils and managed by appointed people not elected people.

I strongly believe that Racial Discrimination Act and the Northern Territory anti-discrimination laws need to be reinstated and take into effect immediately.

I also believe that Income Management scheme should be abolished as it's very patriotic, punitive and again discriminative.

The communities in Alice Spring and I am sure communities all over Northern Territory are very strong, resilient and have enterprise capacities that the Government needs to focus on these and work with communities instead of imposing lots of policies that are obviously not working.

Semra GULER