

Dear Community Affairs Committee and Senators,

I am writing this submission against the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011, in protest to the extension of the Racist Discriminatory policy of the Labor Party and Government, against the Aboriginal People in the Northern Territory.

Recent consultations with Aboriginal Communities, groups and HubTown People, showed a majority stating strong objections to the extension of the Intervention, known as Stronger Futures Bill 2011 Legislation.

Their voices were silenced in the Government report after these consultations, which were a sham and only presented the Government's pre-determined agendas of Stronger Futures policies. The Elders voices stating they wanted their children to be educated but there was a definite need to have bilingual education in schools, arrange buses to take Community/Homeland children to school and bring them home safely. An urgent request by parents to include Community people at schools and to have Aboriginal Teachers who are qualified teachers was ignored. At the moment, the Government has fly-in, fly-out teachers, once or twice a week, which isn't enough to devote to proper educational needs.

The Government refuses to take into account Cultural Reasons why a child doesn't attend school regularly, but the main reason is of course the lack of bi-lingual education at schools in the NT. Only one school has bi-lingual education, a private school in Alice Springs, and its attendance is climbing higher and higher, indicating that the children are learning and want to learn. Both Languages, local Aboriginal Language and English are taught and the programme works well. The Government abolished such teaching in other schools where attendance had risen, but after abolishing bi-lingual education the attendance dropped drastically.

What is so wrong for an Aboriginal child and white children, learning Aboriginal Local Language?

Through learning local Aboriginal Language the children become familiar with the English alphabet making it more natural to learn English as a second Language for these children. Both Languages become familiar and natural to the Children. Both Languages can be taught at an early age in fact. The Aboriginal children already speak their own Language but are forced not to speak their Language at school. Why is this so? No other child is restricted to only speaking English in the playground with his/her friends from the same Community. Why then are Aboriginal children told not to speak their own Language at school.

Something is very wrong with this discriminatory policy. What has happened to the Multiculturalism in this respect? AND, Where is the Democracy and diversity of Australia, that used to be?

An Aboriginal child's language includes cultural references, that is important for the child to identify with, much the same as other foreign Languages taught to other ethnic group's children. Identity for the child is extremely important when identifying with a particular Community and Culture, so the child knows where they belong and are not outcasts in the larger society. Australia calls it Multiculturalism and has based its pride in this acceptance of different diverse communities, but has rejected Aboriginal Peoples their place as the First Peoples of this country and the Government's need to assimilate only Aboriginal People into the white society. This attitude and practice through the Intervention-Stronger Futures Legislation is very wrong and discriminatory, and racist.

Also an overwhelming majority disagreed to include the next stage of the Income Management Scheme for the next 10 years of the Strong Futures plan.

Income Management has failed to improve financial improvement for Aboriginal People and this was reported by the Government reports themselves, but the Government gives the public misinformation about the success of the Intervention as a whole. Their reports had said the Intervention was a failure.

The Intervention has created extreme hardships for Aboriginal People in the NT, and Stronger Futures promises to be even harder and less productive in really helping Aboriginal People. It will place stronger hardships and stress on Aboriginal People.

Government promised Aboriginal People, at the last consultations, to have another consultation before Legislation is put to Parliament on the new Stronger Futures Legislation. This promise was broken by the Government. No further consultations were done.

Aboriginal People have been pushed from pillar to post like a sack of potatoes, their rights taken away completely and had legislation introduced illegally by both Governments (Labor and Liberal) to make sure that Aboriginal People remain the poorest of the poor and disadvantaged Peoples of this country.

No other Community in Australia has ever had to suffer so much as the First Peoples of this Country, the Aboriginal People. No other People have ever had to endure racism or discrimination as the Aboriginal People of Australia. No other Community has ever had their rights taken from them or had an Act repealed in order to control them completely, by the Government, than the Aboriginal People.

Through the Governments policy actions they have disallowed local Aboriginal Language to be taught to the children in the NT. No other children in Australia have had such a restriction placed upon them through legislation of this sort.

I cannot describe the hurt and distrust my people feel at this type of treatment by the once was supportive Labor Government, of not so long ago. It is absolutely shameful that a person who is a citizen of this country has no rights and cannot obtain judicial relief like other Australian citizens.

It is that our population has been disgracefully dwindled today that our voice is not heard by the Governments and that they do not listen to us but continue on with their failure policy even though they are fully aware it doesn't work.

We have continually approached the Government with our recommendations that do work but the government ignores us at every turn. We have asked the Governments to listen to what we have to say and work in co-operation with us, not continue on with the failures of the Intervention known as Stronger Futures.

The Aboriginal People of the NT have said "NO to Stronger Futures", but the Government steamrolls it into 2023, without so much as a slowing down of pace to take into consideration our suggestions for success.

All promises to us have been broken as well as the promise to Amnesty International Head, Salil Shetty, to fund the Homelands. The Government wants to starve the people on the Homelands and force them into Hub Towns and then take their Land.

You are obviously aware of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legislation of 1872 and 1875, that Queen Victoria proclaimed together with UK Council, making this ruling of Sovereignty and dominion on Land, Water, Flora and Fauna, an absolute law that cannot be repealed at any time and that the Australian Government for all time must abide by this English Law. Simply it made the Aboriginal People in Australia the only People who have Sovereignty and dominion on Land, Waters, Flora and Fauna, in The Australian State.

If I'm not wrong, this means that the Governments passing legislation to confiscate the Land from Aboriginals could be seen as an act of war against Aboriginal People and the legislation passed by the Australian State's Parliament is illegal and a Genocidal Policy as an act against humanity.

This now realised by us we have still tried to come to some sort of agreement with the Governments but to our dismay the Governments refuse to listen.

We are sorry about this happening when we have tried to reach an understanding with the Governments, but have been rejected.

We have continually asked to listen to us and requested to work together with us, but to no avail. The Government still sees us as children who must be led and taught by them.

I can well assure the Seanate and this Committee that Aboriginal People are not children and don't need to be lead by the Australian State. We have led ourselves for thousands of years and we have survived to tell our stories.

THANK YOU.

Deni Langman