

Laura Diete

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Summary of the Strong Futures Bill 2011 and related legislation

I am writing to you to express my serious concerns regarding the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill. I am a non-indigenous wife, mother of three young children, past secondary school teacher and a current member of Songlines community choir for reconciliation. I am one of many who are ashamed at our Government's treatment of our Indigenous peoples.

In 2009 the Australian Government signed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, yet has failed to uphold these rights. The Northern Territory Intervention has had a devastating impact on Aboriginal communities causing "negative impacts on psychological health, social health and wellbeing, and cultural integrity" (AIDA Health Impact Assessment 2010).

I am utterly incensed after reading numerous reports and articles (ATSI Social Justice Reports, AIDA HIA, Australian Productivity Commission, Statement Against The Ongoing NT Intervention) that all highlight the horrendous mistake the NT Intervention has been. Yet, unfathomably, the Strong Futures Bill aims to continue along this blatantly arrogant and unconscionable course of paternalistic control of our Indigenous people.

In numerous reports the recommendation to consult with Indigenous communities in order to effect positive change is very clear. The Strong Futures Bill 2011 and related legislation has not been developed through effective consultation with Indigenous communities and therefore will only further alienate, frustrate and discriminate against Indigenous peoples.

'Strong Futures Bill' seems to be a very disingenuous title for such legislation. It appears the only 'strong future' this legislation will create is for the many hundreds of non-indigenous bureaucrats employed in the delivery of the NT Intervention.

I believe the Strong Futures Bill 2011 and related legislation is disrespectful and damaging to our Indigenous Australians politically, socially, culturally and economically. I ask that you not support the continuation of the NT Intervention through this proposed legislation.

I ask that you do unto others as you would have them do unto you. I ask that you admit mistakes. I ask that you acknowledge, respect and protect the precious cultures and traditions of Ancient Australia. I ask you to recognise that diverse communities require diverse responses and that a one-size-fits-all policy determined in Canberra can not effectively assist Indigenous communities to overcome their challenges. I ask that you take those too-many-millions of dollars being spent on the administration of income management and other Intervention bureaucracies and invest it into effective programs developed in consultation with the various Indigenous communities to truly work towards building strong, sustainable, effective futures for Indigenous Australians. I ask you to return dignity, pride and self-determination to those impacted by the NT Intervention .... PLEASE!

Sincerely,

Laura Diete.