

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE INQUIRY INTO STRONGER FUTURES LEGISLATION

My name is Raelene Silverton (nee Abbott) from the Urana Potara Homeland, Central Australia.

We are First Australians and what is indigenous when we call ourselves First Australians (relha) of this land of Australia?

Jenny Macklin should stop the intervention once and for all. Stop using relha (Aboriginal people) and trying to look after Aboriginal people like a mother.

Let relha (Aboriginal people) go free.

Why drag us backward when we trying to go forward.

When I was 15 years old in 1959 I learned to live whiteman's way. I went down south to learn so I could come back and help my people. I lived with white people, learned whitefella way, how they live. I learned domestic work, child care, cooking, cleaning house, doing gardening, veggies and flowers, so place can look nice. I am a Christian woman because I like to live equally with white people because we all belong to Australia.

Even though I learned whitefella way I am still relha (Aboriginal). I know my culture and I want to teach my children songs and dances of the land.

Jenny Macklin and Julia Gillard told me when they handed back the Finke Gorge that I've got to keep up the good work because they were informed that I am a delegate for the Central Land Council. I want to keep up the good work. Other relhe (Aboriginal people) feel the same.

I'm saying this for all relha (Aboriginal people) in the Northern Territory.

Alcohol

We need treatment/rehabilitation centres for dealing with alcohol and substance abuse, not imprisonment. Non-Aboriginal people don't/won't get this same treatment of being imprisoned.

Social Security

We have the right to make our own choice whether to be on Basics Card or get money from Centrelink. Before the intervention most Aboriginal people managed their own income.

Some people feel down-graded/low when they have to pull a green card at supermarkets. It is very embarrassing you have to cover the card with your whole hand.

Land

Aboriginal people are a race of people that have been on this continent for thousands of years. This land means everything to us. Land is our home whether we sleep under the stars, in a humpy, tin shed or a house. It is part of our language and culture. It is our heritage. We don't want to be rounded up into suburbs, towns.

And again, Jenny Macklin, stop the intervention for good. We come a long way from 1940s to be free and be equal with white people to work and live in this land we call pmarra – home.

We want to be free people.

Raelene Silverton and family.
29th January 2012.