

To:
The Senate Community Affairs Committee
Regarding the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011

From:
Janet Jones,
B.SW., B.Counselling,
B.Sc. Community Mediation.

Dear Committee Members,

I wish to make the following submission to the Committee in response to the proposed Stronger Futures legislation.

Articles 3 (Self Determination), 19, 21 and 23 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) all steer the way for governments. Australia is but one signatory to The Declaration, and it is important to work by these rights. The 'Special Measures' referred to in Article 19 enable governments to make housing improvements *without* taking leases over Aboriginal Freehold Title, an interpretation that respects the principle of Aboriginal empowerment. All parts of the UNDRIP are to be applied in ways that empower Indigenous people and demonstrate relinquishment of paternalism and racism. Aboriginal people have suffered in complex ways as a result of colonisation and colonial attitudes. Health research and health policy informs us that Recovery requires self-determined pathways to achievement and well-being. Aboriginal communities are distinct societies with customs and culture that are distinct, even between communities. Their pathways to recovery therefore must necessarily, by evidence-based practice and by adherence to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, be developed, delivered, maintained and evaluated from decision processes totally controlled by, and applied within, each individual community. Government's role is one of facilitation, by its obligations under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Sincerely,

Janet Jones

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