

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

Nikko Raffin

I wish to make a submission to the Committee to express my opposition to the proposed Stronger Futures legislation.

I have spent time in the central desert & in the top end working as an artist with Aboriginal people - I was shocked & appalled by the "intervention"
It was extremely clear to me, whilst working amongst these peoples, was that every thing we as white Australians attempted to implement to "help" these people only disempowered them further. The only way to truly be of service in this situation is to come on board & provide financial support for the **initiatives they instigate** (they may not always be successful).

I witness millions of dollars being spent by government, on implementing a Mental Health program that totally missed the mark - whilst there were extremely effective programs being implemented thru the Language centers & Culture centers already established on the ground that simply needed some financial input for their effectiveness to be far reaching.

Please, I am asking, can we wake up now, & realise that any "authority over" another is a misuse of power.

Please, we need to listen to & support the voices of these extremely beautiful original inhabitants of this land.

I concur with the concerns expressed by community groups and national organisations, that the legislation does not reflect the views expressed by communities during the Stronger Futures consultations, and that it will further embed the disempowerment and discrimination that was begun under the

Northern Territory Intervention.

I ask that the legislation be withdrawn and that an alternative policy is developed, based on genuine consultation, community empowerment, the respect of Aboriginal culture, lands and languages, and the fundamental right of Aboriginal people to be able to control their own lives.

I trust that there are ears in Government that are finally willing to listen.

It was a truly very beautiful . . they have Cinderella's shoe . . let there be a cultural wedding

many many blessings & peace

Nikko Raffin