

From: Dawn Wilson
Sent: Tuesday, 14 August 2007 7:36 PM
To: Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Bill re Aboriginal N.T. action

Dear Chairman and members of the Committee,
Please consider this Bill very carefully. As citizens we place our trust in you to look closely and make wise decisions. I oppose this Bill, not because I excuse sexual abuse in any way, but because:

1. I see this as a 21st Century Invasion of Indigenous People, and I believe it will go down in history as just that.
2. The writers of the report "Little Children are Sacred" (Anderson and Wild) are "devastated" that their report has been used in this way and have stated that actions taken are NOT those recommended by them.
3. I am an ordinary person with very limited understanding of our Constitution - but does it allow the government of the day (whether supported by the opposition or not) to remove land from the control of the people and offer them a 99 year lease instead? Especially, in regard to aboriginal people, in view of the rigid stance of governments about 'continuous occupancy'. Will this ruling be invoked by the present or future governments if they see fit? And for white populations (said advisedly as we are any colour but white - pink in part perhaps) will this open the door for liberties to be taken further by governments? There seems to be a lot of authoritarian action in the air lately, none of which is good for democracy.
4. Why do things apply in one situation but not in another? With the Aboriginal population the land can be taken. Regarding the Murray Darling the Minister responsible for statements, (Turnbull) in relation to water allocation, said (and was not contradicted as far as I know) "you can't go around confiscating people's property". Please explain.

I feel that the Government has opened a 'can of worms' in its precipitate action and will live (or not) to rue the day. I hope and trust you will not join them.

Yours sincerely,

Dawn Wilson