

**From:** Ros Berry

**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 August 2007 10:55 AM

**To:** Allison, Lyn (Senator)

**Cc:** Abetz, Eric (Senator); Adams, Judith (Senator); Allison, Lyn (Senator); Barnett, Guy (Senator); Bartlett, Andrew (Senator); Bernardi, Cory (Senator); Bishop, Mark (Senator); Boswell, Ron (Senator); Brandis, George (Senator); Brown, Carol (Senator); Calvert, Paul (Senator); Campbell, George (Senator); Carr, Kim (Senator); Chapman, Grant (Senator); Colbeck, Richard (Senator); Conroy, Stephen (Senator); Coonan, Helen (Senator); Crossin, Patricia (Senator); Eggleston, Alan (Senator); Ellison, Christopher (Senator); Evans, Chris (Senator); Faulkner, John (Senator); Ferguson, Alan (Senator); Fielding, Steve (Senator); Fierravanti-Wells, Concetta (Senator); Fifield, Mitchell (Senator); Forshaw, Michael (Senator); Heffernan, Bill (Senator); Hogg, John (Senator); Humphries, Gary (Senator); Hurley, Annette (Senator); Hutchins, Steve (Senator); Johnston, David (Senator); Joyce, Barnaby (Senator); Kemp, Rod (Senator); Kirk, Linda (Senator); Lightfoot, Ross (Senator); Ludwig, Joe (Senator); Lundy, Kate (Senator); Macdonald, Ian (Senator); Macdonald, Sandy (Senator); McEwen, Anne (Senator); McGauran, Julian (Senator); Marshall, Gavin (Senator); Mason, Brett (Senator); McLucas, Jan (Senator); Milne, Christine (Senator); Minchin, Nick (Senator); Moore, Claire (Senator); Murray, Andrew (Senator); Nash, Fiona (Senator); Nettle, Kerry (Senator); O'Brien, Kerry (Senator); Parry, Stephen (Senator); Patterson, Kay (Senator); Payne, Marise (Senator); Polley, Helen (Senator); Ray, Robert (Senator); Ronaldson, Michael (Senator); Scullion, Nigel (Senator); Sherry, Nick (Senator); Siewert, Rachel (Senator); Stephens, Ursula (Senator); Sterle, Glenn (Senator); Stott Despoja, Natasha (Senator); Troeth, Judith (Senator); Trood, Russell (Senator); Watson, John (Senator); Webber, Ruth (Senator); Wong, Penelope (Senator); Wortley, Dana (Senator)

**Subject:** National Emergency legislation

Dear Senators,

It is now up to you to insert some sense into the current push to steamroll this crucial legislation through our Parliament. I am including a copy of the letter I sent to the Prime Minister and Ministers Brough, Nelson and Abbott on the subject but my request to you all is to really look closely at the legislation, discover and bring to public attention any loopholes or proposals, decisions or lack of same that would turn what could be a great humanitarian effort into a destructive shambles. I am speaking from more than 15 years experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the North of Australia. I am deeply concerned.

This huge piece of legislation has been pushed through in less than 24 hours after little or no real consultation with those involved—not the people who will be affected by these decisions nor those who will vote for the legislation nor those in whose name these actions will be taken. In your inquiry please check whether any of this almost \$600 million will be spent helping the alcohol-addicted men, women and, I'm afraid, children who will suffering through the DTs and

other effects of the grog being cut off. Unless this happens we can expect violence, desperate illness and suicide.

Please forget political party-lines and implications, work together as a real House of review, thinking only of the women and children that I believe would ultimately be better helped by less haste and

Yours sincerely,

Rosalind Berry

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Dear Sirs,

I have worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the north of Australia for over 15 years and I want to express my concerned opposition to the speed at which this crucial piece of legislation is being pushed through Parliament.

Minimal consultation, if any, with important Aboriginal leaders; 24 hours allowed for the Opposition, minor parties and Independents to read and digest hundreds of pages of legislation; ONE day given for this most important and controversial piece of legislation to go through the House of Representatives and much the same for the Senate—Ministers, this is sheer stupidity. You had the chance to do something of great and lasting value, and with bi-partisan support. Instead you've blown it for what seems to be simple party politics.

Pushing through this Bill in such a way is disrespectful of Aboriginal people, the institution of Parliament and all politicians and the entire Australian community.

Please do not suggest that Aboriginal children and women will be saved from imminent physical and sexual abuse by this speed. Drastic action is needed, I agree, but with all the current activity and intervention in the communities the women and children are probably safer than they have been for years. Two weeks will not make a huge difference to them but the damage to our Parliamentary system is likely to be great. And, I suggest, to the Coalition.

As a voter, I find it highly insulting to be told that having a thorough debate in our Federal Parliament on this vital piece of legislation is not possible. It looks as though the government is forcing this through in an attempt to hide something. Perhaps because, as I read in this morning's Age article, "The minister's power is sweeping, the checks and balances minimal, the rights of redress limited"? I sincerely hope not.

Please stop this rush. Allow time for proper debate and take steps to ensure that this legislation is thoroughly understood by politicians, the legal world, the Aboriginal leaders and the Australian community as a whole.

Rosalind Berry