

From: Kay McPadden Sent: Thursday, 9 August 2007 4:50 PM
To: Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)
Subject: FW: Submission re Legislation to intervene in NT

The Honorable Senators - members of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee I urge you to delay the passage of the legislation and to extend the Australian community and the Parliament process to allow adequate time to examine the legislation and its implications. I believe it is a total abuse of the trust of the Australian people that one of the most significant pieces of legislation in Australia's history is being rushed through without opportunity for consultation with those who will be most affected, and without any time for public debate and proper scrutiny. I call on all parties to uphold proper democratic processes and allow public debate. The Bill has serious implications for the Racial Discrimination Act and the Land Rights Act. Such legislation needs to be drafted and redrafted, assessed and debated over many, many months. Long-term plans need to be developed. I believe that the removal of the Permit to enter community lands has nothing to do with keeping children safe and in fact has the potential to work against child protection and safety. There are many ways we can save children from abuse, but there is only one way that the Government can gain access to Indigenous land. I believe that this legislation confuses these two aims. Everyone wants to see Australian children safe and protected but there is terrible potential for this legislation to further dispossess and disempower Indigenous Australians. It may well be saving children now only to condemn them to a future without their land, and without control over their own lives and the lives of their communities

Yours sincerely
Kay McPadden