Submission re Stronger Futures

To the Senate Community Affairs Committee

Regarding the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011

From Lorraine Julie Williams

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

The current N.T. Intervention is racist & inconsistent with human rights.

In 2008 I visited Mapura, a Homeland Community in SE Arnhem Land, & saw first hand the effects of the Intervention. Despite there being no drugs, alcohol or evidence of child abuse, this policy was still being enforced without any consultation with the Community. I saw that it's effects had been detrimental. It had

1) forced the closure of their on site shop

2) resulted in people having to go to Elcho Island to shop. This involved a round air flight costing $500

3) increased the cost of living

I saw no benefits at all from the N. T. Intervention. All the evidence I saw clearly showed that the implementation of this policy was undermining the Community & decreasing it's viability. The Community itself certainly did NOT want it. I found Mapura a strong empowered community intent on maintaining their culture, lands & language. They were more than capable of controlling their own lives. I have NEVER seen children as happy as I saw in this community. Their culture made me realise how lacking & selfish ours is in so many ways.

I left Mapura feeling disgusted with Federal Government policy & the N. T. Intervention. They are retrograde & further continue 200 years of patronising, disempowering, racist treatment of Aboriginal People.

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I ask that the legislation be withdrawn and that an alternative policy is developed, based on genuine consultation, community empowerment, the respect of Aboriginal culture, lands and languages, and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.

Lorraine Williams