Submission re Stronger Futures

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

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It is urgent that the extension to the Intervention be stopped. The Intervention must be replaced with measures agreed upon by Indigenous communities.

I have read and analysed the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Policy Statement and Stronger Futures Act and believe they will create a stronger future for the Federal Government and not the people it purports to be helping. The paper I wrote is attached.

This legislation is inherently racist, for example whether individual Indigenous people or communities in the Northern Territory abuse alcohol or not is irrelevant to the legislation – all Indigenous people come under the new controls.

Please note there is no place in the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Policy Statement for the strengthening of Indigenous culture, nor even recognition of it. Surely culture is at the heart of Indigenous health.

Also the latest Closing the Gap report released by Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin shows the number of attempted suicides and self-harm cases in remote Territory communities has risen from 109 in 2007-2008, to 229 in 2010-2011. This is very alarming and a situation I believe will get worse.

Under Stronger Futures is Aboriginal people want better health services, housing, jobs, education, welfare payments (linked to education) they must leave their homelands and move to Northern Territory Growth Towns.

Forcing Aboriginal people into towns has been a disaster in the past and will be a disaster again if allowed to happen.

Until governments understand the Aboriginal concept of country, policies will be ideologically racist and lead to institutional racism.

Regards,

Amanda Midlam