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

Joseph Castley,

I wish to make a submission to the Committee to express my opposition to the proposed Stronger Futures legislation. I make it personally, and also on behalf of the AWD Aboriginal Justice Support Group an organisation that for nearly 30 years has been advocating for justice for Indigenous people. I am a member of this organisation which can be reached care of me.

I have been convinced from the beginning that the Intervention was a disastrous undertaking, born out of John Howard's electoral vulnerability and continued for the same reason under the Rudd and Gillard governments.

The justifications advanced by Minister Macklin for its continuation seem to me to have been based on untruths. The consultations she has claimed showed that the Aboriginal people welcomed the Intervention's provisions (Income management , the Basics Card, designated retail outlets .etc) were not adequate or representative, and the opinions they claimed to reveal have been convincingly revealed not to have been those of a large number of Aboriginal people.

As well as inflicting impossibly difficult conditions on Aboriginal people, some of whom had to travel far and at great expense to shop, the policy has lumped all Aboriginal people together as not being able to manage their lives and has denied them basic human rights. International scrutiny as well as reports by prominent and trustworthy Australians has repeatedly condemned the Intervention, and yet the Government continues to disregard this fact.

Continuing with the Intervention will further embed the disempowerment and discrimination that have resulted from this policy since the beginning.

I ask that the legislation be withdrawn and that an alternative policy be developed, based on genuine consultation, community empowerment, the respect of Aboriginal culture, lands and languages, and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

Thank you.
Joseph Castley