Submission to Senate committee Inquiry re NT Stronger Futures bill

Committee secretary,

I do not support the Stronger Futures bills to continue the intervention in the Northern Territory.

The intent of the Bill reads well as to what the government is planning to do in specific areas . .
BUT . . . It seems to ignore the strong statements by significant Aboriginal leaders/communities;
. . . It gives no encouragement to the successful initiatives of aboriginal communities that could be used as models.
The emphasis is still on detail connected to some troublesome areas where government further controls aboriginal people, and giving great power to the Minister.

These proposals give no empowerment to the existing structures of aboriginal communities, their culture & traditions.
* the Federal government has human rights obligations despite the reinstatement of the Racial Discrimination Act; this is not evident.
*the Federal Government is still maintaining a lease policy in exchange for housing and basic services - the lease to be increased to 40 years! (very 'big brother-ish')
*the Federal government has Commitment to the Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples as the basis for government laws, policies & programs affecting Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples; this is not evident.
*government is ambivalent in recognizing the benefits of the 'Homelands' practise despite the minister being recorded as saying that the Government respects the rights of Indigenous Australians to live on their traditional lands and acknowledges the profound connection which many aboriginal people have with their homelands. That the health & well-being of the people is increased while living in their 'homeland'. The content of the Bill does not reflect this.
* bi-lingual education is not funded to encourage consistent attendance at school;
*CDEP programs to increase job opportunities must be re-instated;
*Funding is being stripped from essential services to Homelands, financial support for transporting materials to remote areas effectively forces people into hub towns & cities.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Tonkin