To the Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT

Dear Sir,

I wish to strongly object to the Stronger Futures set of legislation. It continues the old way and it has not worked.
The legislation is really more of the same and it has received condemnation at all levels for its racism.

We have now been reminded once again how mistaken we are, and how punitive coercive policies have only worsened conditions.

Aboriginal peoples lives have not improved, self-harm/suicide, rate of aboriginal youth in jail , over crowded housing conditions and poor health continue.

This is because we are not prepared to accept the concept and the link between poverty and colonialism
We do not accept the importance of autonomy and self-pride and how they are connected to improved health and self image.

As long as we go on displacing and coercing from the top things will not change.

It is very much our time to change our way.

Please no more intervention from the top.

Empower the people in the local areas . . teachers nurses police aids child care workers motherschildren
let them find their leaders and
entrust it to them
and encourage the local source of assistance to turn around this deep wound that our nation carries . .

. . carries because we are only now beginning to face the truth of the damage we did to the nations of aboriginal people who were living here. We displaced them,gave them rum, took their land, annillated them with our guns and our disease.
They were denied rights to negotiate treaties and denied rights to keep ownership of their land.

It is not too late to turn this around. We need strong leadership to hand this to the people and walk with them not before them

Further the Land Reform section of the Stronger Futures Bill seeks to override laws that safeguard community and town camp land
for Aboriginal people for Aboriginal purposes forever. Clauses 34(4) and 34(6,7) water this down by claiming these lands as crown land .
This is a step backwards for Land Rights. Please take time to realise what we are doing .

The issues of Reconciliation are the defining issues of our nation.
We move two steps forward and one step back at the moment please don't let our era, our leadership, be a time that is looked back on as a step backwards.

At the moment it looks like a big step backwards but we can change that and let it be seen that we are listening and that we struggled forward by stopping this legislation and turning to a new way.
Thank-you for reading this
Colleen Keating