

It is obvious that the living conditions of the indigenous population in Australia are very bad. It is also obvious (e.g. from government statistics) that the NTER measures introduced in 2007 have not only failed to improve the situation, but instead added to the further decline of the situation.

The currently planned legislation promising a "stronger future" is basically a continuation of the NTER measures and will therefore result in the continuation of the decline of the situation.

I am confident that the above will be argued in detail and supported with evidence by many other submissions. Therefore I would like to draw your attention to another aspect: the damages to the international perception of Australia.

In the past Australia was regarded as the "lucky and sunny country" and as the "land of the fair go" – without having any major problems. I noticed that this perception has started to change. One reason for this change is the growing international awareness about the situation of the indigenous peoples in Australia. In particular, I noticed the following:

- Academic researchers (including US, UK and other parts of Europe) have investigated the NTER (and found of course the problems caused by the NTER measures). These results are now spreading through the academic world and to the students.
- United Nations:  
The United Nations heavily criticized Australia at several occasions (e.g. the CERD committee, the special rapporteur on Human Rights of Indigenous People James Anaya, the latest Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and the High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay).
- Amnesty International has started to spread information about the situation nationally and internationally (e.g. the Homeland campaign, national newsletters in other countries)
- Films and Documentaries (e.g. "The first Australians" or "Our Generation") are screened internationally and raise awareness of the current situation in Australia. The same happens at film festivals related to Australia (e.g. at the last "Down Under Berlin – Australian Film Festival" in Germany)
- Growing interest of media in other countries in the issues

The international awareness about the current situation of the indigenous peoples in Australia is currently at a rather low level, but many of the above mentioned activities have been started/gained momentum recently. Therefore the perception of Australia will change within the next years, and Australia is in serious danger of losing its positive image.

For the above mentioned reason the new "stronger futures" legislation must be stopped and replaced with some legislation which is not **aiming to improve** the situation, but which **really improves** the situation. The starting point for any really working solution of the problems has been brought many, many times to the attention of the different governments and ministers (but has been always ignored):

## **"genuine consultation with Aboriginal people in designing initiatives for Aboriginal communities"**

(from the first recommendation of the "Little Children are Sacred" report)