Submission re Stronger Futures

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

Along with a group of friends I have been following the Northern Territory Intervention with some concern from its inception.
I am aware that this is a complex matter, and that before 2010 problems in many remote Indigenous were so entrenched that some kind of intervention seemed necessary, at least one that was targeted to the areas that needed it.
Subsequently, The DVD, "Our Generation" and the "Conversation with Elders" have conveyed, in the voices of the people now living under the Intervention, how discriminatory and demeaning its "blanket" application has been.
The Racial Discrimination Act (RDA) was suspended by Parliament in 2010 so that the Northern Territory Intervention could be implemented. Last year after much protest the RDA was reinstated. This sounded like good news. BUT the Intervention was BROADENED to include non-Indigenous communities so that it no longer contravened the RDA.

Hence I wish to make a submission to the Committee to express my opposition to the proposed Stronger Futures legislation.
I concur with the concerns expressed by community groups and national organisations, that the legislation does not reflect the views expressed by communities during the Stronger Futures consultations, and that it will further embed the disempowerment and discrimination that was begun under the Northern Territory Intervention.
I ask that the legislation be withdrawn and that an alternative policy be developed, based on genuine consultation, community empowerment, the respect of Aboriginal culture, lands and languages, and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.
Anne McNamara.