Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs

I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed 10 YEAR extension of key measures of the NT Intervention.

The extension ignores and discounts what was spoken about and requested at the "Stronger Futures" consultation.

e.g. the need for aboriginal communities and people to be listened to, not to have to repeat over and over again what they are really asking for and what isn't working. So many people are feeling disempowered. With the disbanding of the CDEP people are feeling there is nothing to live for and not only has the alcohol consumption risen so has self harm and suicide. Working for the dole and having income management is not providing the value that the CDEP program gave people.

The picture of what is happening in communities is grimmer since the intervention in many areas. The following quote sums up the despair so many are feeling:

"We don't want another decade of discrimination here in Ramingining. The government is extending and strengthening laws designed to assimilate Aboriginal people. We will not sit back and watch these attacks on our lives, our future, our culture and our law," said Mathew Dhulumburrk, a 67 year old Gupapuyngu man.

"After 5 years, it feels like the water level has climbed up to our neck. Another ten years will bring it way over our heads. The government is drowning us slowly and wonders why twice as many of our young people are attempting suicide. There is no valid reason to discriminate against Yolngu in this way."

I wish to see the Government working with key Aboriginal leaders from the Northern Territory and peak organisation e.g. The Australian Council for Social Service, The Australian Education Union, the Aboriginal Peak Organisation in the NT and all the organisations that are delivering services throughout the Northern Territory to the people on the ground.

Working in true partnership in this way will bring about the real changes that so many people are wanting, both in the government and in and for Aboriginal communities.

Joan Lynn OAM