

Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011 and two related bills.

I write as a citizen with some very limited exposure to NT communities, both large and small homelands. The diversity of indigenous living arrangements and opportunity is enormous. I have seen people pay \$90 for a tin of flour in remote homelands in Arnhem Land and women at Wadeye having to pay \$2 just to access their bank balance. These are fundamental financial circumstances which people living in cities can't imagine having to deal with. I don't think the measures undertaken and the new extended proposals by Federal Governments past and present adequately take account of the complexity of peoples' lives, geography and access to basic goods and services. I think if this were the case, there would be greater recognition of the importance of building and supporting local control and decision-making, rather than rely on these blunt financial instruments. If these types of measures were forced on business - one size fits all- they would scream from the rafters.

There are measures which work- not punitive ones- there has been enough punishment of indigenous people surely? Let's focus on the positives for a change and enable a viral growth of positivist. We know that to sustain change long-term investments in re-growing or actually building local culture, leadership and pride is needed. These are the only long-term solutions and as indigenous folk keep saying, must be built hand in hand with or by them.

There is nothing in this legislation which indicated that us white fellas have learned anything from our very sorry history of 'interventions'. The waste of money going to policing regulation, fulfilling bureaucratic requirements could be transferred to strong communities, effective programs and the great task of building new community norms and capability.

I also believe greater attention needs to be paid to the research undertaken by Jumbunna, the Indigenous House of Learning based at UTS on the failure of evidence to demonstrate that the proposed approach is actually going to work: "

The best view of the data available is that opinions of the community are diverse, but there still no hard data on program benefits. As there is other evidence that purchasing patterns, for example, have not changed significantly because of income management, a moratorium on extending programs would be a good starting point for serious interest evidence-based

policy."

As with the paucity of evidence for income management, 'fly in fly out' style of consultations that have been reported to me in places like Wadeye, cannot be treated with confidence.

All the key signals indicate that the policy directions proposed by the Stronger Futures Legislation will potentially cause more harm than good.

I urge reconsideration towards a principled approach based on respect.