I wish to lodge my opposition to the proposed bill to extend the injustices of the Northern Territory Intervention for another 10 years.

With its focus on alcohol abuse, land reform and food security there is nothing to suggest the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011 plans to create stronger futures in the areas of health, housing, education and employment. In fact it could be argued that the Stronger Futures are for the government, not Aboriginal people who are disempowered by this legislation. New racism is inherent here; no-one is suggesting Aboriginal people are biologically inferior but Stronger Futures works as an exclusionary construction affecting the status of Aboriginal people.

There is nothing in this document that says anything about maintaining Aboriginal culture, yet surely culture would have to be an important part of a stronger future. There's a statement that "the object of this Act is to support Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory to live strong, independent lives, where communities, families and children are safe and healthy" however, despite the finely worded intention, the legislation actually takes away independence.

This legislation will extend punitive and discriminatory provisions first introduced through the Northern Territory Emergency Response for a further ten years in NT Aboriginal communities, without the consent of these communities and despite widespread complaints of disempowerment and hardship. It will further entrench Income Management as part of the national welfare system despite widespread opposition from affected people and the wider community. Such punitive measures do not work and are

expensive. Instead government funds should be redirected into programs which are designed, owned and directed by Aboriginal people.

Gabrielle (Gai) Smith