

## Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011 and Two Related Bills

I believe the legislation should be withdrawn because it incorporates a blanket, negative and punitive approach to social change without it being agreed to by those it affects. This fact and the fact that the bills are specific to Aboriginal people makes this legislation racist and disempowering.

Change should be based on strengths that people have and building on those, measures that strengthen culture are recognized as strengthening health. In particular, communities that are relatively functional shouldn't be treated with this blanket negative approach, where there are community structures and members who can participate positively in social, health and economic improvements. Initiatives need to be responsive to local needs and involve and be directed by local people. Institutional support can only be effective when it is sympathetic and responsive to local circumstances and ultimately empowers those it is aimed to help.

Withdraw this demeaning legislation. It is not only demeaning to Aboriginal people, but to Australia, and adds to Australia's all too often un-proud history that isn't yet taught in Australian schools.

I look forward to the day when there is a positive recognition in Australia's constitution, and school curriculum, of this country's ancient Aboriginal culture and history. Aboriginal Australia is not "young and free", it is ancient and suppressed. There is no point to an independent Australia that doesn't recognize and celebrate its ancientness, we have so much to be proud of in being a part of this ancient land and we have a duty to take part in looking after it, its people, its stories and its culture.

We need to recognize that the solutions to the situations that Aboriginal Australian's are in are many and varied and need to be as individually responsive to their circumstances as the circumstances are individual. However, there is one blanket principle that will always be effective in working with Aboriginal Australia, and that should never be neglected, and that is the fundamental: **Show Respect**. This legislation does not show respect, that is why it should be withdrawn.