31/1/12

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed reiteration of the 'Northern Territory Emergence Response" - or as it is now more commonly referred to, with its shiny new package and user friendly label, as the 'Stronger Futures' policy . I write to you with the deepest feelings of urgency and regret that if this legislation is passed, you are gearing up to set this country in a direction, that is not the way the people of this nation wish to go. In doing so, your duties in the role as a representative of the Australian people is inherently lacking, and near to doing a complete about-face from moving this country forward towards a future we can ALL be proud of.

The vast array of issues facing the people of the Northern Territory, and throughout the rest of our great land, are not any that can be dealt with via a 'legislation package', nor by overlording the first, and rightful people of this land with some backwards thinking, outdated model that has glaring shades of the late 'Aboriginal Protection Act' smacked all over it. Basic human rights seem to be something this government have forgotten, or even worse, manage to find loopholes around! Never mind the fact that leading human rights organisations have condemned the legislation and treatment of the aboriginal people in recent years - the United Nations has even condemned the intervention saying, "it breaches the nation's international obligations."

Under false pretences and some rather loose, unsubstantiated accusations made around child abuse in 2006, all decisions surrounding community, housing & health are now made by 'Government Business Managers'. Not by the people whom live there - the people who truly understand the full cultural complexity of issues facing them, day to day. I now ask how does this happen in our young 'free' country? How has it been allowed that these people have had their rights taken away from them in such a demeaning and degrading way? The actions taken so far have already driven an even greater divide between the people and look set to put real reconciliation a long way yet, but the imposition of the 'Stronger Futures' policy, threatens to take our country further backwards again, and leave us with even more collective shame and disgrace to feel for our actions against our brothers and sisters.

I implore you dismiss entirely the damaging intervention and begin to work with the people with whom these issues affect, to discuss and review their "Rebuilding from the Ground Up: Policy alternatives to the Northern Territory Intervention".

The people must be given back their land, their freedom and their very rights in decision making before any further healing can be done – and it needs to be done now.

Yours sincerely,

Hayley Sestokas