



# Aboriginal Catholic Ministry

## Sydney Archdiocese



ABN: 41 231 661 451

### **The ACM endorses requests to send *Stronger Futures* for scrutiny by Parliamentary Human Rights Committee**

The Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Sydney Archdiocese, congratulates the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights for questioning the compatibility of the *Stronger Futures* Bills with Human Rights. The Committee was established in March this year to examine legislation to ensure that it is compatible with Human Rights and to report to Parliament.

In a statement made to Parliament today, Chair, Harry Jenkins MP said that the Human Rights Committee has received a written request from the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples to examine the *Stronger Futures* Bills. In response, the Committee has initially written to Minister Macklin asking her to identify the Bills' compatibility with Australia's human rights obligations. The Committee will wait for her response before committing to any further action.

Graeme Mundine, Executive Officer of the ACM, Sydney welcomed the move, "Over the past five years many aspects of the Intervention have drawn strong criticism from various human rights bodies. The UN's Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Professor James Anaya and the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay are among those who have criticised the Government over the Intervention.

"We are concerned that the *Stronger Futures* legislation retains many of the discriminatory and racist aspects identified under the Intervention legislation.

"We are also concerned that aspects of *Stronger Futures* are not compatible with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. One such right in question is the principle of Free and Prior Informed Consent. The Government did undertake consultations in 2011; however the process has been strongly criticized. Additionally, there is a chorus of voices from Aboriginal Nations in the NT saying that they do not feel they have been properly consulted and they reject the *Stronger Futures* Bills. The Consultation process, however well intentioned, was clearly not appropriate or adequate and with such vigorous dissent the Government cannot claim to have obtained Free and Prior Informed Consent.

"The Government is clear that they consider *Stronger Futures* to be non-discriminatory and the measures to be necessary not racist. Therefore, they should not fear submitting these Bills to the scrutiny of the Human Rights Committee before the Senate votes. I urge the Government to do so", Mr. Mundine concluded.

Comment: Graeme Mundine

ACM Sydney  
PO Box 121 Alexandria NSW 1435 Australia  
Ph: +61 2 9698 4265 Fx: +61 2 9698 3912