

WGAR

Working Group for Aboriginal Rights, Australia

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Media Release

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Working Group for Aboriginal Rights considers Stronger Futures legislation should face Human Rights scrutiny

The Working Group for Aboriginal Rights condemns the Northern Territory (NT) Intervention and its proposed extension for ten years and expansion into other parts of Australia, through the proposed 'Stronger Futures' legislation.

The Working Group for Aboriginal Rights urges the Australian government to fully accept and respect the sovereign rights of Aboriginal Nations and Peoples and to cease their paternalistic actions towards Aboriginal people, who have successfully survived climatic and social change over millennia. Aboriginal people are capable of running their own lives and communities, but it is the lack of self-determination and the governments' ruthless attempts to assimilate Aboriginal Peoples into 'one Australia', which is really the cause of the perceived 'problem'.

It is many Australians' inability to accept and celebrate difference and otherness that accounts for much of the social dysfunction within Aboriginal society.

The government's agenda to move people off homelands into growth hub towns exacerbates the distress communities are subjected to. Our perception is that this is to open up the land for development, mining and agriculture.

We urge that there is scrutiny of the Stronger Futures bills in order to bring them in line with the international Human Rights covenants and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In the longer term we urge the Australian Government to enter into negotiations with sovereign Aboriginal Nations in order to create a new Constitution, through which Aboriginal Peoples can take their rightful place in this continent. The current proposed 'Constitutional recognition' is merely tinkering at the edges of a profoundly racist constitution, which still belongs to the British Parliament.

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