

and the Alyawaar Nation

Should this Stronger Futures legislation pass through the Senate and become law, it will be a day of mourning for all Aboriginal peoples. This legislation will be the cause of great suffering in our hearts.

For those of us living in the Northern Territory the anguish of the past five years of Intervention has been almost unbearable. Many have simply given up hope. We have been burying people who can no longer live with the pain and despair.

We had believed that we were moving to a time of security, where we would no longer live from day to day in a state of fear but would be supported to find our own destiny in the security of our law and our culture. We little expected to be thrown into such turmoil by a Government determined to remove from us control over everything that we most value.

Money alone can never be the answer. Government has never understood and still fails to understand, that badly needed funds must be accompanied by the willingness to allow us to determine the direction of our lives. There must be respect and genuine partnership, not the top-down approach which undermines and devalues us as a people.

How is it that so many from across Australia – from small organisations, from churches and national institutions - understand the value and importance of our people determining their own futures, whereas Government does not?

If this legislation should pass the senate, one thing that Government needs to know is that Aboriginal people will fight. We will never accept this racist legislation that separates us from other Australians and creates its own Apartheid in our country. Furthermore those thousands of people who have given us their statements of support will be with us. We will fight together for real justice.

Aboriginal peoples of the Northern Territory will never give up their rights – their right to live in true safety with the certainty that their culture and their language and their law will be protected and respected, as it is under international law under conventions to which Australia is a signatory.

We put the Government on notice. Do not pass this racist legislation.

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And

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