

Abandon the *Stronger Futures* legislation

ANTaR Victoria urges the Senate not to pass the *Stronger Futures* legislation. We are opposed to this legislation and call upon Government to abandon it for the following reasons:

Statements from Aboriginal people affected who oppose it and the NT Emergency Response

There are varying perspectives on the community consultations undertaken by the Government, with ample documentation to show that many Aboriginal people affected oppose the legislation, despite the Government invoking consultations as revealing support for the legislation.

Concern that land rights are being undermined as a consequence of this legislation

Reform to the current restrictions on Community Living Areas may be desirable but the approach in the *Stronger Futures* legislation provides no protection for owners against development; but instead makes it possible for the decision-making power to be transferred to the Federal Minister.

We also note that some community members have raised questions around the degree of independence from Government of Northern Territory Land Councils, providing further context for the questions over security of land rights in the NT at this time.

The legislation negates self-determination

Once again, there is ample documentation to show that many Aboriginal people affected oppose the legislation for this reason.

The legislation is not going to be reviewed prior to the upcoming Senate vote as to whether it is compatible with human rights norms

While a Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights has recently been established, this valuable process has come into effect too late for the *Stronger Futures* legislation to be reviewed for its compatibility with human rights norms. In light of the many concerns raised in relation to the *Northern Territory Emergency Response* (NTER) legislation and some aspects of the *Stronger Futures* legislation by human rights monitors, such a review is crucial.

ANTaR Victoria urges Government to work in true partnership with Aboriginal people, and to do so while enabling the realisation of the rights set out in the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which the Government supports. In particular, ANTaR Victoria is concerned about the absence of Government commitment to gaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' free, prior and informed consent to laws that the government makes relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We also note with concern the imminent extension of NTER-style legislation into Shepparton, Victoria.