

## COMMITTEE ON RACIAL EQUALITY

The Committee on Racial Equality (CORE) is a Canberra-based group of citizens committed to support racial justice in Australia. We have met with Members of Parliament, public officials and Indigenous people involved in and affected by the N.T. Intervention. We seek to raise public awareness of the consequences of the Intervention and the proposed Stronger Futures Legislation on Indigenous communities.

We would like to add our voice to that of many organizations in support of the Yolngu Nations Assembly Statement, and call on all Senators to vote against the Stronger Futures Bills.

The Yolngu Statement confirms that the Government has not listened to the requests of the Yolngu and other 1<sup>st</sup> Australian peoples. We therefore support the Statement in its call for “a return to a mindset of partnership based on the principles of Self Determination.” Some of the observed failures since the principles of partnership and self management have been neglected are documented in their Statement and the Appendix:

- Youth have less respect for Elders and culture since decision making has been removed from the communities.
- Management no longer reflects Yolngu and 1<sup>st</sup> peoples own structures.
- Disrespect for culture is further exacerbated by the downgrading if not virtual abandonment of the use of local languages in education.

We support the Yolngu people's call to the traditional owners in the Northern Territory to ban co-operation on land leases and exploration licenses until the Government can work with them in genuine cooperation.

It is also apparent that the top down approach of the Intervention overall has not resulted in safer communities, better health and higher school attendance. It is very unlikely that the Stronger Futures Legislation with its coercive measures will fare any better.

We ask the Government to base their policies on principles of partnership and self-determination in the spirit of international obligations Australia entered into when Australia signed the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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Spokespersons for CORE