

## Statement *regarding Australian Federal Government Stronger Futures Bills and Northern Territory policies,*

To the Leaders of the Australian Federal and Northern Territory Parliaments: Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott, Leader of the Australian Greens Christine Milne, Northern Territory Chief Minister Paul Henderson and Northern Territory Opposition Leader Terry Mills, with a copy to the Federal Minister for Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin

**We the Leaders and Custodians from Ampilatwatja Community Australia give our full support to**

**Yolŋuw Makarr Dhuni  
(Yolŋu Nations Assembly)**

To our brothers and sisters of 8 nations in the Western, Central and East Arnhem Land areas of the Northern Territory: We say to you, we are with you and we will stand with you as one peoples against the *Australian Federal Government Stronger Futures Bills and Northern Territory Policies*.

We call on the Federal Government to scrap the Stronger Futures laws and return to full consultation, negotiations and agreements with our leaders and custodians in the Eastern Alyawarr Region to discuss a way forward in partnership, and that our peoples be involved at all levels of government in setting policies, programs on health, education, employment and training.

We as the true custodians, land owners and leaders now demand that the Federal, State and Territory governments must respect all human rights, and recognise and acknowledge our peoples rights as first Australians to make all decisions to determine our own future directions, to work and walk with us towards a better future for our peoples.

- **We call for full return of our land rights. We do not want native title in its present form.** We did not give our free and prior consent or agree to have this imposed onto our peoples who did not to give our sacred objects in exchange. These objects hold our country, our peoples nations together.
- **Native title does not provide first Indigenous Australian peoples with ownership of the land or the power to stop development by others out side the community lease areas.** Under the Native Title legislation our peoples' rights to land can be extinguished and our inheritance extinguished. For example our lands can be taken for mining from which our people receive little or no benefit while the real benefit

goes to others and the land is destroyed.

- We call on our people to reject any meetings or discussions with government appointed bureaucrats, or representatives of government agencies on Stronger Futures laws.
- We urge other Indigenous and traditional Aboriginal leaders and custodians to stand strong to fight for our inheritance and rights as first peoples of this country.
- ***We call on International UN bodies to review the Australian Federal government's Stronger Futures laws under the human rights charter. And a full scrutiny be carried out against its human rights obligations.***
- ***We advise our people to fully withdraw any support for the Stronger Futures laws until the UN reviews have been carried out.***
- We seek a public apology from the Federal Government for the way we have been treated and effectively stigmatised as child sexual abusers, drug traffickers, rapist, and murderers under the NTER which treatment continues today under the Stronger Futures laws.
- We reject being forced to grant Government community leases as a price for the provision of housing and community services such as health and education.
- We call on the Federal Minister to return control of Aboriginal Benefit Account (Mining Royalties) to the peoples of the Northern Territory and to stop using this account **to establish and pay for the leasing arrangements** on our community lands.
- We say no to further mining exploration, and we withdraw support of all new mines.
- We fully support our brothers and sisters who are standing strong against the government proposed Muckerty waste dump north of Tennant Creek.
- Our people have been made outcast in our own country, under the NTER and the Stronger Future laws to the point where everything has been taken away from our people.
- The gap is widening and not closing.

**Richard Downs**

Alyawarr spokesperson Eastern Region

24 May 2012