



Las Casas Dominican Centre for Justice, Peace and Care of Creation
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Statement concerning Stronger Futures Legislation, due to go to the Senate in the week of 18th June, 2012.

We are convinced that the Stronger Futures legislation which was passed by the House of Representatives with minimal debate needs to be revised.

We ask that Senators of all parties use the right of review of the Senate for a better future for all Australians.

Australia’s international reputation was sadly damaged by legislation and policies for Aboriginal communities under the Howard government and these have not been sufficiently changed under two successive Labor governments.

‘One size fits all’ is never going to work in any complex situation, let alone in rural Aboriginal communities. We all know that self-empowerment and education are the ways to help communities help themselves. If they impose an alcohol ban themselves, the communities can stay ‘dry’.

The Yolgnu People were leaders with their Bark petition but the Federal Government of that time did not understand. They are still trying to defend their land and culture. They are now appealing to the Senators to vote not on party lines but on principle for better legislation. We support their Petition.

We are concerned that, when the Bankstown people and other urban communities realise the extent to which the Stronger Future legislation affects them, there will be problems. Extending compulsory income management to low income urban families is not a wise way to make the legislation avoid the Racial Discrimination Act. Centrelink already provides for voluntary income management and we have seen people who appreciate this help. Compulsory income management is very different.

We understand that the Community Living Areas (CLAs) are included in the Stronger Futures legislation. These are areas of land excised from pastoral leases/properties for Aboriginal people to live on and be close to their traditional lands. CLAs are now included in the Stronger Futures legislation, without any prior consultation or legal safeguards. This can result in the people living there being made homeless.

The ‘Stronger Futures legislation is well meaning but fundamentally flawed.

Rosemary Kinne op
On behalf of Las Casas Centre Group

15th June, 2012.