

Thank you for your email regarding the Government's Northern Territory Emergency Response bills. The Greens will be voting against these Bills.

When the bills were introduced the Australian Greens were the first to call for them to go to a Senate inquiry. Despite the Government's reluctance it was referred to the Senate Legal and Constitutional committee - but for one day only. This is hardly enough for a package of bills that is 500 pages of complex legislation needing careful analysis and review. I question how good governance can possibly be carried out by ramming these bills through the Parliament so quickly.

I believe the bills are racist and discriminatory and will not deliver what is actually required to effectively tackle child abuse in the Northern Territory.

The government's top-down approach is fundamentally flawed. We are critical of the Howard-Brough crisis plan, which comes after 11 years of inaction and numerous reports, and attempts to superficially tackle complex issues in an election environment.

To succeed in the long term it is absolutely essential to have genuine community engagement and ownership of programs and initiatives addressing child abuse and the causes of child abuse. Community consultation is the first recommendation of the "Little Children are Sacred" report.

One of the key criticisms of the approach taken by the federal government is that they have failed to consult and failed to learn from the past. We want to see a more considered and comprehensive response and an evidence based policy that builds on existing knowledge of successful programs to deliver long-term solutions that strengthen and empower communities.

For further information on the Greens' response to this issue please refer to my website. www.rachel.siewert.org.au. I appreciate you contacting me.

Senator Rachel Siewert
Australian Greens' spokesperson for Indigenous Affairs