

MEDIA RELEASE

15 March 2011

**Hon Jane Aagaard MLA, Committee Chair
Ms Kezia MLA, Committee Member**

Territory Politicians Should Answer to Territorians

The Chair of the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, the Hon Jane Aagaard MLA and Committee Member and Deputy Opposition Leader Ms Kezia Purick MLA, will appear before a Senate Committee tomorrow to argue that the Commonwealth Government should not have the ability to override Territory law without the permission of the Parliament.

Territorians are encouraged to attend to view the proceedings taking place via videoconference from the **Litchfield Room, Parliament House Darwin at 10.00 am on Wednesday 16 March 2011.**

The Senate Committee is inquiring into a Bill introduced into the Senate that would remove s.9 of the *Northern Territory Self Government Act* which gives the Federal Government the power to amend or disallow any law passed by the Territory Parliament. The existing power of the Federal Parliament to overturn Territory laws would remain.

"This Bill is a small but very important step on the road to Statehood," Committee Chair Jane Aagaard said today.

"If it is passed it removes the ability of Commonwealth Government Ministers in Canberra to take away the laws that were validly passed by the elected representatives in the Northern Territory within six months.

"It would improve democracy and accountability for all Territorians but still retains Commonwealth Parliament capacity to overturn Territory laws at any time." Mrs Aagaard said.

Kezia Purick said "We are supporting this Bill because it means we have grown up and taken that next step. We don't need another Government from somewhere else looking over our shoulder all the time.

"Territorians know how to keep their politicians accountable and it's really up to us to make our case and answer for the laws we pass on behalf of the people of the Territory," Ms Purick said today.

The Senate hearings conclude tomorrow and the Senate Committee is expected to report back to the Federal Parliament with recommendations by the 21st of March.

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