

MEDIA RELEASE

Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

Hon Jane Aagaard MLA Committee Chair
Kezia Purick MLA Deputy Leader of the Opposition

2 March 2011

NT Constitutional Committee Urges Support for Territories Amendment Bill

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Chair of the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, the Hon Jane Aagaard MLA and Deputy Leader of the Opposition and committee member Ms Kezia Purick urge all Senators to support Senator Bob Brown's *Self Government Amendment Bill* due to be debated in the Senate tomorrow.

The Bill would remove the ability of a single Commonwealth Government Minister to overturn a law made by the 25 Member Northern Territory Assembly, but would retain the Commonwealth Parliament's ability to scrutinise and overturn Territory laws. This is separate to Senator Brown's Euthanasia Bill.

Members of the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs visited Canberra on the 7th and 8th of February to continue the fight for Statehood and more Territory self determination. The meetings were with Independent, Green, Government and Opposition Members and Senators.

"The ability of a single Minister to overturn our laws was raised in our discussions with Federal Members and Senators and our concerns will hopefully influence their views when considering this important Bill," Mrs Aagaard said.

"Every Member and Senator we visited expressed in-principle support for the Territory's desire for Statehood and to legislate on behalf of Territorians.

"This is a test of the will of the Commonwealth to respect democracy and acknowledge that voters living in the Territories should have the same democratic rights as those who are resident in the existing states," she said

Ms Purick said support for the Bill would send a message to all Australians that Territory residents should have their laws respected.

"We were ready for self government over 30 years ago and it's time that people in Canberra realised we can make our own decisions on behalf of the people of the Northern Territory," she said.

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