



Police Federation
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Mr Elton Humphery
Committee Secretary
Senate Community Affairs Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Committee Members

**PFA SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION: SENATE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE NT EMERGENCY RESPONSE BILL 2008**

The Police Federation of Australia (PFA) made a submission in March 2008 to the Committee regarding the *Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation Amendment (Emergency Response Consolidation) Bill 2008 (NT Emergency Response Bill 2008)* and on Wednesday 30 April 2008 I gave evidence to the Committee's hearing in Darwin on behalf of the PFA.

In light of the Committee's particular interest in, and questions regarding, the system of permits to enter certain Aboriginal communities, I wish to take the opportunity to clarify, for the record, the PFA's position on this matter since the Federal Government's intervention in June 2007.

We have from the outset taken the view that no link has been established between the existence of the permit system and the problem of sexual abuse of

Indigenous children. And yet, it was argued that the range of measures introduced by the former government were necessary to address the problem of child sexual abuse.

It is also evident that some parties argue that the permit system should be removed to allow for the "normalisation" of communities through greater opportunities for economic and social development/interaction with the broader Australian community.

If any change to the permit system is based on this rationale then that should be clearly stated by government. While there may be a sound basis for this argument the PFA has not considered the merits or otherwise of the proposition.

On that basis, the PFA, maintains that in the absence of clear evidence of a link with child sexual abuse, the rationale for the changes made to the permit system in 2007 was spurious.

As a consequence, the PFA has no objection to the measures being taken in the current Bill before the Committee to restore the permit system, albeit in a modified form allowing for certain Ministerial authorizations to enter Aboriginal lands.

I trust that this makes the PFA's position on changes to the permit system clear.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Kelly'.

Vince Kelly
President
PFA & NT Police Association