

New MP backs Pearson model

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Northern Territory communities would welcome the introduction of Noel Pearson's Cape York welfare model, newly elected MP Bess Price says.

The indigenous leader called for the model of welfare reform yesterday, after a push by West Australian community leaders to introduce the Pearson model in remote indigenous communities.

“There's families out there who would want that and would want to take control and make sure that their kids and families are looked after,” Mrs Price said yesterday in Alice Springs.

“It's a way of ensuring that communities build up their leadership and families.

“They can take on the ownership of looking after their families.”

“They've taken the responsibility away from them.”

But with the federal government's Stronger Futures legislation having passed parliament, she admitted she was not sure how it could happen.

Her win last month in the seat of Stuart over Karl Hampton, a former ALP minister and her nephew, sparked controversy.

This week Opposition Leader Delia Lawrie lodged a formal complaint with Northern Territory Police Commissioner John McRoberts, claiming interference by Electoral Commission staff at one of the polling booths in Mrs Price's electorate.

Mrs Price declined to comment on the allegations yesterday, saying it would be inappropriate for her to do so because they were the subject of a police investigation.

She said Alice Springs traditional owners needed to assume leadership roles in the community to deal with the high level of alcoholism and violent crime in the desert town.

“I've always pushed the line that I would like to see the traditional owners of Alice Springs take on more responsibility in how their town should be treated,” she said.

One of her first goals as a Territory MP is to restore peace to Yuendumu, a

community divided by a violent family dispute since the death of a young man in an Alice Springs town camp in 2010.

“Sending in mediators hasn't worked -- they've been doing that for three years,” she said.

“I know the history, I know what's been going on, and I can help these families.

“Most people just want to get their lives back.”