

Micaela: Whilst on the Tiwi Islands we visited the women's safe house, a place where the Tiwi women can go to escape the abusive or unpleasant circumstances in which they may find themselves in at home. The safe house was part of the government intervention, and while listening to these women's stories, we asked what part of the intervention they disliked; their one answer, was the basics card.

The basics card works by placing the social security payments the Tiwi people receive into two accounts. The money in the first account automatically pays for the rent, electricity, rates, the phone bill, water and gas, which Indigenous do not get to touch. The money in the second account is put on to the basics card which they can spend freely. However this card can only be used at a limited number of outlets including certain grocery and basic clothing stores. If their children go away to schooling interstate, they cannot give them any money because the basics card is accepted in very few places, outside of their own communities.

The women we spoke to at the safe house in Nguiu told us how they felt as if they are being treated like children, because any responsibility they have, has been stripped away from them because they are Indigenous. The women told us, how in Australia when the basics card was introduced the anti-discrimination legislation was put away.

While at the safe house, listening to those women talk about the basics card was an experience that I will never ever forget. That was really the first time in my life that I can honestly say that I have ever really experienced compassion like I did listening to their stories. I felt extremely angered and I got really emotional and torn inside because of what they were saying and how they were being treated. I felt a deep awareness of sympathy for their suffering and I gained an understanding and now I feel that it is my duty and my obligation to those people to do something about it. Through listening to their stories I am determined to do whatever I can to try and stop the discrimination, the prejudice, the intolerance and the injustice that these proud people endure.