



Australians call for an open, fair and public consultation on the legal protection and recognition of our human rights

Press Release – 28 August 2008

More than 50 organisations from across the country and different sectors today called for the Federal Government to engage the country in a public consultation on human rights protection.

The Australian Human Rights Group has sent an open letter to the Prime Minister and the Attorney General calling for open, fair and public consultation on the protection of human rights. The letter was endorsed by more than 50 organisations and a number of prominent Australians.

“Many countries with a shared history and similar values to Australia, including the United Kingdom and New Zealand, have improved their legislative human rights protection in a way that has enhanced basic democratic values, improved public policy and services and maintained Parliament’s sovereignty,” AHRG chair Susan Ryan AO said.

Australia is the only democratic country in the world devoid of a national human rights law.

“We welcome the Government’s commitment to consultation on the recognition and protection of rights in Australia, especially as the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is approaching on December 10, but want to ensure the process is democratic and inclusive of marginalised and disadvantaged Australians,” she said.

Ms Ryan said the consultative process should be inherently democratic and enable Australians to decide how best their rights should be protected.

“The consultation should be an opportunity for us all to articulate our beliefs and values, to consider who we are as a nation and what we aspire to be. It would be a chance to bring our rights home,” campaign director Phoebe Knowles said.

AHRG is a non-political network of individuals and organisations committed to enhancing legal protection of human rights in Australia by encouraging community consultation and the drafting of a human rights law.

Letter to the Prime Minister attached.

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