



AUSTRALIAN BLINDNESS FORUM

ABN 47 125 036 857

**Response to The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties - Parliament of Australia:
Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are
Blind, Visually Impaired, or otherwise Print Disabled (Treaty)**

The Australian Blindness Forum (ABF) congratulates the Australian Government with proceeding to ratification of the Treaty, the members of the ABF have advocated for many years to increase access to accessible information in the preferred format of people who are blind or vision impaired.

The ABF is the peak body for organisations that provide rehabilitation and support services to Australians who are blind or vision impaired. The ABF is also the Australian member of the World Blind Union who have, through their members, driven the process that resulted in the creation of the Treaty. The ABF would like to thank the Australian Government and the Attorney General's Department for their support and proactive advocacy in increasing the availability of accessible information.

As members of the Committee will be aware, access to information is the greatest barrier for people who are blind or vision impaired to independently participate in the community and to fully realise their citizenship.

The ABF asks that the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties expedite this Treaty through their processes and encourage the Australian Parliament to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

As Australia has been a leader in developing and advocating for this Treaty both by Government and ABF members, we believe that it is important that we are one of the 20 countries who ratify this Treaty to ensure that it comes into force as soon as possible

Once again we encourage the Committee to process the Treaty efficiently to enable ratification.

If you wish to seek further information on the benefits of Australia ratifying this Treaty and the effect it will have on Australians who are blind or vision impaired or print disabled, please do not hesitate to contact the ABF.

Yours sincerely

Tony Starkey
ABF Chair