

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA IN NEW SOUTH WALES  
*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the  
Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography*  
SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TREATIES

We have been very pleased to see the Amendments to the Criminal Code Trafficking in Persons Offences on 6 July 2005 and the improvements to State and Federal cooperation that have been instigated. The Asia Regional Cooperation to prevent People Trafficking and other initiatives to help the people in Asian countries is a very constructive program.

**The Criminal Law obligations**

With the support of COAG and Ratification of the *Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography* this abuse of children will be discouraged.

Information on the website is a comprehensive coverage of the problems involved. In brief:

- Prosecution of Australian nationals apprehended here or overseas or en route.
- protection of the interests of the child and proper rehabilitation assistance to victims.
- prosecuting the offender and protecting the interests of the child.
- extradition of the offender from other countries
- where there is no extradition treaty to establish reciprocity
- give mutual assistance to States Parties.
- strengthen international cooperation arrangements for assistance to victims and
- to address the root causes of the offence by providing appropriate assistance to countries.
- legislate provisions to confiscate the proceeds of crime.
- law to deal with internet sites

**Internet sites are a big component of this problem** and it was good to see Australians involved apprehended recently. Advertising and showing child pornography is a criminal offence. However, we believe **this charge should apply to all pornography** as it is undermining respect for women and fostering sexual abuse in some families and in the community as people who lack the social skills to negotiate relationships act it out with more vulnerable people.

Our observation is that the spread of pornography has been a prime factor in the continuing growth of domestic violence and sexual abuse over the last 10 years. The Commissioner of Police this week announced that the abuse of Australian children has increased 5% each year during this time. This is not a natural occurrence in Australian Society. Making Child Pornography illegal will not really help the bulk of people. When people, usually men, have become addicted to pornography they develop a problem with normal relationships. This makes women and also children vulnerable to abuse. Viewing all pornography destroys the enjoyment of natural sexual relationships. It is teaching unhealthy and abusive activities which harm women and particularly children when women will not cooperate. This should be a matter for the Convention on the Rights of Children on present Australian indications of the physical and sexual abuse of children.

**Related Policy obligations**

- To prevent offences and to raise public awareness.
- Provide assistance for victims and set up procedures to enable victim compensation.

We wish to support the actions set out in the document and urge the ratification of the *Protocol On the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography*.

Social Issues Representative, State Council of Presbyterian Women's Association  
Marion Smith AM