



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Human Rights Sub-Committee

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 24 June 2004

Report tabling

Human Rights and Good Governance Education in the Asia Pacific Region

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade believes the development of a discrete National Plan of Action for Human Rights Education should be a priority for Australia.

The JSCFADT report of its inquiry into Human Rights and Good Governance Education in the Asia Pacific Region was tabled in Parliament today.

The Chair of the Human Rights Sub-Committee, Senator Marise Payne said "Australia is in a strong position to make a contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and the development of good governance in the Asia Pacific region through its efforts in human rights and good governance education".

The report found protection of human rights depends on them being accepted, observed and protected by each and every member of our society. This requires that people are educated and informed about human rights principles, the relevant international human rights instruments, and the impact of human rights on their daily lives.

The report found a lack of consensus on the level of community understanding of human rights and good governance in Australia, demonstrating that current promotional and educative approaches are not having the desired impact. The Committee recommends that Australia works towards developing consensus on definitions of human rights and good governance regionally, with the aim of promoting the development of a regional human rights education agreement.

The report also concludes that there is a need to provide better coordination of human rights and good governance education efforts in Australia to provide direction and assist with the better use of resources and sharing of knowledge and experience.

In response to calls for a second UN Decade for Human Rights Education, the report recommends that the Australian government call for the United Nations to conduct a rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of achievements of the current Decade prior to further discussion on an additional Decade.

For media inquiries, contact the Sub-Committee Chair, Senator Marise Payne,
on 02 6277 3810 or 02 9893 5151.

For all other inquiries, contact the Sub-Committee on 02 6277 2097 or visit the committee website
at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/reports.htm