



The Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of Victoria and Tasmania  
Justice and International Mission Unit

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28 October 2005

Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
Department of House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

I am writing on behalf of the Justice and International Mission Unit, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, to support Australia acceding to the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography 25 May 2000*. We note that Australia signed the Optional Protocol on 18 December 2001 and look forward to Australia joining the 100 states that have ratified or acceded to the treaty. We agree with the National Interest Analysis that the Optional Protocol is in line with the existing Australian commitment to combat slavery, sexual servitude and people trafficking.

We believe that Australia acceding to the Optional Protocol will place it in a better position to promote action on the issues of child trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography by other States within our region.

We are deeply supportive of any action to eliminate incidents of exploitation or abuse of children in Australia and overseas. The Gospel calls on Christians to protect and care for children, a call which the Church has not always upheld but seeks to fulfil.

The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania has been active in campaigning for the Australian States and Territories to take legislative action to ensure that Australia is able to become a State Party to ILO Convention No. 182 on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. The key issue here has been ensuring that Australian States and Territories have legislation to ensure that it is illegal for a child to be employed in the production of pornography.

We are willing to play our part in ensuring Australia's compliance with the Optional Protocol, especially Article 9(2) with regard to promoting awareness to the public at large "about the preventive measures and harmful effects of offences referred to in the present Protocol."

Yours sincerely,

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