

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

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Question No. 88

Senator Hanson-Young asked the following question at the hearing on 23 February 2009:

Outline the steps the Government is taking to promote the optional protocol to CEDAW throughout the community, which the Committee understands Australia formally becomes a signatory to on March 4.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The Australian Government Office for Women in collaboration with the Australian Human Rights Commission, YWCA and UNIFEM produced an educational resource titled, *Women's Human Rights*, to coincide with the launch of Australia's 6th and 7th CEDAW Report. The education pack was officially launched on 18 December 2008 by the Minister for the Status of Women Tanya Plibersek, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick and YWCA's CEO Caroline Lambert.

The education pack provides information on human rights treaties, CEDAW and the Optional Protocol, and is a valuable source of information for those seeking guidance on women's human rights. The education pack also provides advice on how non-government organisations and individuals can themselves promote the principles of CEDAW.

Both Australia's 6th and 7th CEDAW report and the education pack are publicly available through the Office for Women website at http://www.ofw.facs.gov.au/international_engagement/index.htm. Distribution of the education pack to all Australian secondary schools is also underway. The Office for Women has also received a lot of interest from colleagues in the States and Territories who wish to promote CEDAW and the Optional Protocol at the local level. The Office is currently distributing 540 CEDAW Reports and education packs to the Northern Territory as part of International Women's Day celebrations.

In addition to the education pack the Office for Women has promoted Australia's accession to the CEDAW Optional Protocol through the National Women's Alliance network. The Office for Women frequently utilises the Alliance network to disseminate information as they represent 70 member organisations and reach more than five million Australian women.