



**Australian  
Human Rights  
Commission**

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Tabled Document No 3

By: THE HON CATHERINE BRANSON  
AUST. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
Date: 25 MAY 2009

14 January 2009

The Hon Stephen Smith MP  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your letter received on 16 December 2008 regarding Australia's participation in the Durban Review Conference in April 2009.

I would like to inform you that the Australian Human Rights Commission has decided that it will participate in the Conference. This decision is based on the view that participation at the Conference will contribute to the Commission's work in a number of areas, including identifying concrete measures and initiatives for combating and eliminating all manifestations of racism, including against Indigenous peoples, and promoting ratification and implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The Commission is aware that some may wish to use the Conference to express contentious, if not wholly unacceptable, points of view. The Commission will take care to distance itself from such views.

In preparation for the Durban Review Conference, the Commission will continue to consult with your Department in order to identify relevant issues and to develop a strategy for presenting these issues at the Conference.

Of course, should you wish the Commission to reconsider its above decision, I will arrange for the issue to come before the Commission again - together with any material that you might wish the Commission to take into account in reviewing the decision.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Branson QC  
President