

Clifford, Julia (SEN)

From: Joan Pearson [joan.pearson@bigpond.com]
Sent: Saturday, 26 April 2003 5:56 PM
To: Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Human Rights Commission



From Joan Pearson joan.pearson@bigpond.com

Peter Hallahan
Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
Room S1.61, Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

I wish to make a submission on the proposed changes to the Human Rights Commission (HRC).

My concerns are primarily that the changes give political control of the HRC, and the removal of specialist commissioners means that the generalists who replace them will not necessarily have the knowledge required to operate effectively.

In particular the changes will

- 1) lead to the demise of the effectiveness of the HRC by reducing the number of commissioners and generalising their work.
- 2) result in the HRC being turned into a Government lap-dog by forcing it to seek the Attorney-General's permission before it can investigate any issue. (eg. Refugees, Indigenous people, and people with mental health issues would be most unlikely to get this government's OK)

I wish to appear before the Senate Committee to speak to my letter as there has been insufficient time to prepare a proper written submission. Indeed, I only received the information late on 23/4/4, and was unable to reply by the putative closing date of 24/4/4. I trust that the issue will not be rushed through -if so. it will confirm the feeling of many people I know who feel that our human rights are being whittled away