

Clifford, Julia (SEN)

From: Cindy-Lee and Sharee Harper [clandsharper@hotmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, 20 April 2003 6:19 PM
To: Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Submission



Regarding the "Australian Human Rights Commission Legislation Bill 2003"

I do not like the omission of "Human Rights and Equal Opportunity" and substitution of "Australian Human Rights" for a number of reasons. One being that it seems to be a shift away from a commitment to equal opportunity as this is no longer mentioned. Another reason I don't like the substitution is that I don't know what is meant by "Australian Human Rights". Do they differ from "Human Rights" as we currently know them? I fear that the government is trying to avoid our commitment to human rights as detailed in international agreements that we have signed. I fear that the substitution will lead to a lowering of our human rights and our human rights obligations. This is something that I do not want to occur. I also fear that the substitution is a way for the government to avoid our obligations to asylum seekers coming to Australia and to those already in Australia - a way of denying them their human rights. If that is the case, then I would not like to see Australia display such a lack of compassion to what must be some of the most vulnerable people in the world.

I do not like the necessity for the Attorney General's approval before the Commission is allowed to intervene in proceedings. I do not see the necessity for this. Surely we should trust the judgement of the commissioners in such matters as they have the expertise in the area of human rights and equal opportunity. I do not want to see this removal of power from the commissioners. I fear that it is just a way for the government to interfere with the commissioners duties and with proceedings related to human rights and equal opportunity. I would like those that have the expertise and knowledge with regard to human rights and equal opportunity (ie the commissioners) to intervene in proceedings when they feel it is necessary to do so.

Yours sincerely

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