



WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTION
NETWORK AUSTRALIA



The WOMEN'S REPORT CARD

(((CEDAW Training & Resource Kit)))

This training kit is part of WRANA's most recent work on CEDAW - The Women's Report Card: A Community and UN Report on the Status of Women in Australia –documenting the experiences of women in relation to human rights and gender equality in Australia.

The Women's Report Card will produce two reports – a Community Report and an NGO CEDAW Shadow Report.

The training kit is a resource for the training of state and territory convenors and working group members participating in the project.

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WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTION
NETWORK AUSTRALIA

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Introduction



Welcome to the Resource Kit for the Women's Report Card Project!

The Women's Report Card is being co-ordinated through the Women's Rights Action Network Australia (WRANA). The Women's Report Card will be a chance for women from across different sectors, different backgrounds, different points of view, and different locations across Australia to have their voice heard domestically and in the international arena.

This Resource Kit contains information that you can use to assist women to participate in the Women's Report Card Project. In this introduction we hope to give you a brief outline of the scope of the project, and explain the steps WRANA plans to take in developing a project that is exciting, invigorating, and incredibly relevant to all women in the current political environment here, and overseas.

Stage 1 - Training & Planning

The project begins by building a base of understanding and knowledge about Human Rights Treaty System (HRTS) used within the international community, and the United Nations in particular. The training focuses on introducing and exploring the uses we might have for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other Human Rights standards whether we're working at home or on the international stage.

The first component of the training will be the face-to-face training for state/territory project working group convenors, to be held in Melbourne July 26th and 27th.

The face-to-face training aims to equip state/territory working group convenors with a working knowledge of CEDAW and an understanding of the uses that can be made of the UN Human Rights Treaty System HRTS in our everyday work.

The first round of training will develop information sheets about how women are faring in Australia. It will also provide an opportunity for national networking. Together we will work on strategies for data collection and ways to involve women from diverse backgrounds. We hope that the resource kit will provide you with adequate information and assist you in facilitating consultations during Stage 2 of the project.

The materials that have been prepared for the training weekend we hope will see a long life in helping to pass on the knowledge you learn and share. They also contain materials that will be useful in running the consultations during stage 2 of the project.

Stage 2 - Consultation / Information Gathering

We are asking each of the state/territory working groups to conduct at least two face to face consultations, one of which we hope will be outside of the state/territory capital city. This phase of the project aims to collect information from across Australia, reflecting a broad sweep of experiences and including a diverse range of communities and sectors.

The working group has identified a number of possible areas for consultation and data collection:

- Violence against women
- Education
- Housing & utilities
- Health
- Economic security & employment
- Legal status
- Political participation

We would like women to discuss experiences and thoughts under each of these headings, but it's also important that if your consultation groups think other issues are important, that they get aired as well.

We want to hear stories and tell of women's lives, but governments and even the UN like statistics and provable 'facts'. Hopefully through your consultations people will suggest research works, case studies and best practice projects to you that provide another insight into the areas we are looking at. As people suggest sources collect names and where to find them, even better collect hard or soft copies!

Stage 3 - Reports and Lobbying

The women's Report Card Project will produce two reports. One will be a Community Report the other being an Australian Shadow Report.

Every four years, the federal government is supposed to submit a report that outlines what Australian Governments have done to implement CEDAW to the Committee on the Status of Women. The report the Australian Government has submitted is the combined 4th and 5th reports.

It has become common practice for non-government organisations (NGOs) to come together to produce Shadow Reports for the advice of the Committee when they consider the Government's report. The Shadow Report is an opportunity for us to present our understanding of what actions governments have taken to implement CEDAW.

The Shadow Report is required to be produced in a very strict manner following the articles of CEDAW. So that we can make greater domestic use of the work that goes into producing a shadow report we will also produce a parallel community report.

The community report will report under the identified priority areas, through cross cutting themes and be divided by state/territory. The community report will be presented in a more accessible style, telling people what the state of play is in the priority areas; what the federal government is doing; and what their state/territory governments are doing, in order to facilitate advocacy work at all levels of government and the community.



Stage 4 – In our own Backyards

After we've collect the information, written it up coherently and taken it to the UN what difference will it make?

The difference will be in what we do next.

With the expert analysis of the Committee on the Status of Women to back us up we will be able to take our report and the findings of the Committee back to our own communities, services and organisations and see what we can do to make a difference.

Depending on when the Committee considers the Australian report, we will have a well developed and well researched tool to take us forward to federal, state, and territory elections and budget processes.

Why is WRANA doing this Project?

In order for the United Nations and others in the international and domestic community to hear a balanced view on the status of women in Australia, it is important that women's voices are heard as well as the Australian Government's. This project is an opportunity to bring the voices of the women of Australia to the UN, to speak about our lives and our experiences.

WRANA has initiated this collaborative project because of our commitment to a feminist understanding of human rights in both local and global settings. WRANA as an organisation has specific expertise in working with the Human Rights Treaty System and in international human rights more broadly. WRANA also has a commitment to working collaboratively with women and women's organisations to ensure that the great diversity of women in Australia is reflected in this project and for example can draw on work we have already done on mainstreaming issues of race into women's organisations in this process.

Objectives of the Project

- To produce a shadow report based on broad consultation and expert understandings of the status of women in Australia in order to inform the deliberations of the Committee on the Status of Women.
- To produce a community report that provides a snap shot of the status of women in Australia today and provides a common base for women to undertake advocacy work in communities and to local, state and federal governments and international bodies.
- To provide training and build understanding in the operation and possible applications of CEDAW and the UN HRTS.

What we think you can get out the project

- An introduction to and greater understanding of CEDAW and the UN HRTS, and especially in the ways in which these structures can be used to benefit the women we work with and work for.
- To participate in the development of a comprehensive report that documents women's status in Australia today.
- To formulate shared strategies for progressing the findings of the community report and the Committee's response in our policies, practices and advocacy work.
- A shared language with which to work with other human rights organisations and women's organisations in Australia and overseas who will have undertaken similar training and projects.
- An opportunity to work in new areas and expand your networks.

We hope that you are as enthusiastic about this project as we are. WRANA sees great potential in the Women's Report Card for use domestically and internationally in advocacy, project and program design, and community campaigning.

Thanks for your support in working for women's human rights.

Regards,

National Co-ordinating Committee
Women's Report Card Project

About WRANA



WRANA is a feminist human rights organisation working with women in our community to achieve change in our lives.

The objects of the Women's Rights Action Network Australia are to facilitate Australian activism for the promotion and protection of women's human rights in domestic and international arenas through:

- education and training for women in Australia to ensure that national and international human rights mechanisms are accessible, understandable and relevant in the lives of women in Australia;
- training for women in Australia to enable their participation in national and international human rights machineries;
- advocacy for effective national and international mechanisms for the promotion and protection of women's human rights within Australia and more broadly;
- documentation and raising awareness of women's human rights violations and abuses within Australian society.

WRANA recognises the indivisibility of human rights, and the need to develop informed critiques on the current human rights system, particularly relating to the capacity of the human rights framework to respond to the diversity of women's experiences through the application of an intersectional definition of discrimination.

Members of the Women's Rights Action Network - Australia endorse the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and work towards the creation of a society which respects and protects all human rights.

Projects

- The First Australian Tribunal on Women's Human Rights
- Production of a report, video and education package on the Women's Human Rights Tribunal
- Establishment of Rights on Line, a monthly email activism alert for supporters of women's human rights
- Community Consultations on gender and race in the lead-up to the World Conference Against Racism
- Production of the Gender and Racism Kit
- A public lecture on Violence against women with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy
- A seminar with human rights activist, Tahmeena Faryal from the Revolutionary Women of Afghanistan
- Report on Women and poverty in Australia, for the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
- Collaborative research project on female asylum seekers in Australia
- Production of a kit focusing on mainstreaming gender advocacy within community organisations

- Ongoing campaign for Australia's adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- Support for the visit to Australia by the Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN), a Burmese NGO, drawing attention to acts of rape and sexual violence committed by the Burmese military regime
- Lobbying the Federal Government and the Opposition Party on:
 - issues for refugee women
 - opposing amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act
 - Australia's participation in the United Nations Human Rights Treaty system
 - Lodging of the Government report to CEDAW Committee
- Briefing the Government and delegation on health, housing and human rights issues for the Commission on the Status of Women

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Human Rights in Australia



The Australian nation today is the product of both colonialist history and geographical location, interpreted through current government policy. This has led to Australia having a mixed response to the application of UN Human Rights treaties.

White Australia's roots are based in violence and invasion. A brutal regime of convict transportation and incarceration, and the murder and dispossession of Indigenous peoples at the hands of white men are hallmarks of our early history. Racist persecution was carried out through the denial of Indigenous people's humanity, such that they were commonly referred to and regarded as "flora and fauna"¹. A program of cultural genocide was underway: stealing Indigenous peoples' land, decimating families, communities and cultures by forcibly removing children.

Australia ratified the Genocide Convention in 1951: a time when it was practicing cultural genocide. As yet, there are no domestic provisions for its enactment, nor have there been reparations or an apology to Indigenous Australians for the harms our government policies inflicted.

Racist practices were enshrined at federation through the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (Cth), as different (non-white and non-Christian) migrants became perceived as a threat to the homogenous white Anglo community. These racist and xenophobic practices implemented in the White Australia Policy were used to marginalise and persecute those seen as the 'other'. Today, such practices are also manifested in laws and policies to exclude refugees and mandatorily detain asylum-seekers in "worse than prison" conditions in remote and inhospitable locations. Australia has ratified the Refugee Convention and its Protocol, yet its day-to-day practice is in direct contravention of the letter and spirit of its provisions.

Racism and other human rights violations are a legacy with which continue to struggle.

Australia has signed a range of treaties including:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on the elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)

How are human rights provisions incorporated in Australian law and policy?

There are four key ways in which human rights provisions can be incorporated in Australia:

- The Constitution
- Legislation
- Policy Measures
- Legal Interpretation

1. For example in NSW, indigenous people were categorised under the Flora and Fauna Act.

The Constitution

There are very limited rights outlined in the Constitution. They include freedom of religion, a right to vote (though there is some question whether this is really guaranteed), a right to commerce between the states, and an implied freedom of communication and an implied guarantee restricting Commonwealth powers. Section 109 gives Commonwealth laws primacy over state laws, where the laws are inconsistent, and where the Commonwealth has the power to legislate in that area. Many of Australia's international human rights obligations are enacted into Australian law under section 51 of the Constitution, the foreign affairs power.

If we compare these to the list of rights and freedoms articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it becomes very clear that people in Australia do not have a strong constitutional basis for the protection of their human rights and freedoms.

Legislation

In order for people in Australia to be able to claim the rights contained in any of the human rights treaties to which we have become party, those rights must be incorporated into domestic legislation. This is called "direct implementation." Once this has occurred, people living in Australia can claim these rights through our own country's legal processes.

None of the treaties that Australia has signed are fully incorporated into domestic legislation.

Instead, treaties have been partially incorporated, if incorporated at all:

- The Racial Discrimination Act (RDA) and the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) either adopt or adapt definitions of race and sex discrimination as contained in the ICERD and CEDAW respectively
- Elements of the ICERD are incorporated in the Racial Hatred Act 1995 (Cth)
- The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) draws on provisions of the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons and Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons
- Elements of the ICCPR are incorporated in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Evidence Act 1995 (Cth)
- Elements of the CAT are incorporated in the Crimes (Torture) Act 1992 (Cth)

The ICCPR and CROC have been scheduled to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth). This means that HREOC can consider the treaty provisions in complaints it receives, and that it can conduct an inquiry if it considers that the acts or practices of the Commonwealth or Territories breach the rights contained in the treaty. CEDAW has been scheduled to the SDA, and ICERD has been scheduled to the RDA. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has not been incorporated or scheduled into any legislation.

Policy measures

The provisions of a treaty can also be incorporated indirectly through policy measures. Policy is the domain of the Executive arm of government. The limitation of this approach is that if the government of the day decides to abolish a particular program, there is no mechanism for judicial review. It is also not possible for people to argue that government should continue to realise that particular human right on the basis of previous policies or programs.



Judicial System

International human rights laws may be applied in the Australian legal system in four main ways.

Statutory Interpretation

The definition of words and phrases in Australian laws can be affected by the meanings of those words and phrases as they exist in human rights treaties. So, for example, the definition of racial discrimination in the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) should be interpreted in accordance with the definition contained in the ICERD and its interpretation by CERD.

Common Law

Common law can other wise be known as Judge made law. Common law acts as a guide for judges in making decisions, following the lead from previous judges' decisions. It is possible to identify fundamental rights in common law decisions, especially when dealing with individual human rights complaints procedures, and in cases involving legislation providing a remedy for violations of rights.

Administrative Law

Human rights treaties to which Australia is a party give rise to procedural rights, including a legitimate expectation that an administrative decision maker will make decisions that are consistent with the provisions of human rights treaties.

Constitutional Interpretation

The High Court of Australia has not yet reached the point where it is prepared to interpret the Constitution consistently with human rights treaties. This, however, is not beyond the realms of possibility, and some ground has been made in other countries, such as Canada.

Australia's ambivalent relationship with international law and human rights

In August 2000, the Howard Coalition Government announced that it was going to seek reform of the UN Human Rights Treaty System, and that subject to such reform being achieved, it would modify the way it engaged with the UN. It is in the context of a rather mixed record that Australia's more recent withdrawal from the UN Human rights treaty system is examined here.

While Australian practice never matched our public international rhetoric, previous Australian governments seemed to consider it important to engage respectfully with the UN Human rights treaty system. They were recognised for their constructive contribution to the development of international human rights standards. Of late, when UN expert bodies have criticised Australia, rather than accept the criticism, Australia has chosen instead to undermine the universal system of human rights. Rather than acknowledging that human rights monitoring mechanisms are about achieving the best possible outcomes for everyone in society, the Australian Government has chosen to represent the process as being about "who is doing worse than us":

"If we are comparing [Australia's record] with arbitrary arrests and executions and having your arms chopped off, the problems in Australia pale into insignificance..."

This shows either strong resistance or gross inability to get the point. The purpose of United Nations review is not to compare Australia to other countries, but to compare the Australian situation to treaty standards, and to identify ways to make sure that all people who live in Australia have the human rights guaranteed in that treaty.

The systematic disengagement with the human rights treaty system is not the only example of the Howard Coalition Government undermining the international legal system. With respect to environmental law, the refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention on Climate Change has been a watershed. The approach of the Howard Coalition Government to human rights and environmental law is in direct contrast to their engagement with other areas of international law, such as trade law and criminal law.

For instance, in March 2002 it was announced by a Government official that a rules-based multilateral trading system was in the Australian national interest, as was the "establishment of international regimes to combat criminal activity which does not respect national borders, including terrorism." Likewise, the Government relies on the legitimacy of the UN Security Council to advance its support for George W. Bush's war on Iraq. The Government has failed to grasp that it is not possible to maintain a functioning and effective international legal regime if one set of policies seeks to undermine it, while another set of policies seeks to bolster it.

The contradictory stance of the Howard Coalition Government is further illustrated by the fact that while it rejects the expert bodies, it is still keen to export its views on human rights via international political forums. For example, the Australian Government is a new member of the Commission on Human Rights. Yet, even within the political environments, the attack on the treaty system is perpetuated, as evidenced at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children in 2002. Again, this shows that its rhetoric in the international arena pays lip service to human rights principles, while its words and actions in Australia are very different.

Withdrawing from Human Rights

While successive Australian governments have used Human Rights in ways that are politically expedient at the time, most have shown respect for the system and the United Nations. March 2000 indicated a significant shift in this thinking. Following a series of critical reports from UN human rights treaty bodies, the Australian Government indicated that it would conduct a closed review of its participation in the human rights system. No public submissions were called for, and the review document has never been made public. Moreover, the closed review undermined a pre-existing publicly accessible review by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties into Australia's post-Cold War relationship with the UN, which included consideration of the UN human rights treaty system.



A three-page press release has been the extent of transparency in the review. This outlined a series of "measures" that would be adopted by the Howard/Coalition Government:

- Take a more "economical and selective" approach to reporting to the UN Human Rights committees, with no indication of how this would be done
- Reject unwarranted requests from treaty bodies to delay removal of unsuccessful asylum seekers
- Deny women living in Australia the right to petition the UN using the CEDAW Optional Protocol
- Only agree to visits of UN representatives when there was "a compelling reason to do so", with no information about the definition of "compelling"
- Reassert the primacy of Government information over NGO information
- Review the operation of the UN refugee system
- Engage in a process of "reform" at the UN

Undermining the development of the human rights system

The stance of the Howard Coalition Government towards the UN human rights treaty system has extended to actively working against the further development of international human rights mechanisms. In July 2002, the Howard Coalition Government voted against the adoption of an Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture. A spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs initially stated that Australia voted against the Protocol because it would enable the UN to make unannounced visits to Immigration Detention Centres. The Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer later clarified that the government had voted against the Protocol because it would allow unannounced visits, and that there was no link between detention centres and asylum seekers. The Howard Coalition Government has also worked against the development of an Optional Protocol to the ICESCR.

Women's Milestones at the United Nations



History of the Global Women's Movement

- 1947** First meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women
- 1948** Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 1952** Convention of the Political Rights of Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly
- 1974** Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly
- 1975** International Women's Year
Government Forum: First World Conference on Women - Opening the United Nations Decade for Women, Mexico City
Document: World Plan of Action: set the goals and objectives for the entire decade
NGO Forum : International Women's Year Tribune – 4,000 participants
- 1979** Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women adopted by the United Nations General Assembly
- 1980** Government forum: Second World Conference on Women
Mid-decade 'stocktaking', Copenhagen
Document: Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade adopted
NGO Forum – 7,000 participants
- 1985** End of the Decade for Women
Government forum: Third World Conference on Women, Nairobi
Document: Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women: Equality, Development and Peace - to the Year 2000
NGO Forum: Forum '85 – 16,000 participants
- 1990** Women's Rights Project at Human Rights Watch founded
- 1991** The first, World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet
- 1992** Amnesty International releases its first report specifically on women's human rights violations
- 1992** United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro
- 1993** Government Forum: UN World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna
Document: The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action
NGO Forum: Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights
- 1993** Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly

- 1994** Appointment of UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women
- 1994** International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Cairo
- 1995** Fourth World Conference on Women
Document: Beijing Platform for Action
NGO Forum: Beijing Forum 1995, Huairou, - 26,000 participants
- 1996** Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)
- 1997** Five Year Review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit + 5)
- 1999** Five Year Review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD + 5)
- 2000** Optional Protocol to CEDAW becomes operational
- 2000** United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 - the first resolution ever passed by the Security Council to specifically address the impact of war on women, and women's contribution to conflict resolution and sustainable peace.
- 2000** First women's human rights resolution adopted under mainstream agenda item at Commission on Human Rights
- 2000** Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly for the Five Year Review of the Fourth World Conference on Women: Women (Beijing +5)
- 2000** Gender related dimensions of racial discrimination, CERD General Recommendation 25.
- 2000** Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Gender and racial discrimination, convened by the United Nations Division for Advancement of Women, Office of the High Commissioner for the Human Rights, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women.
- 2001** Recommendation of the UNCHR Expert Group Meeting on "Application of human rights to Reproductive Sexual Health"
- 2001** Report on the 45th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, addressing Women, the girl-child and HIV/AIDS; and Gender and all forms discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance
- 2002** Launch of the Women's Action Agenda for a Healthy and Peaceful Planet 2015
- 2002** Report on the 46th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, addressing Eradication of Poverty; and Environmental Management- a gender perspective.
- 2002** United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg



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- 2002** Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court enforced
Crimes covered by the ICC are: War Crimes & Crimes Against Humanity – which both include rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and other forms of sexual violence. The Crime of Aggression & The Crime of Genocide.
- 2003** Election of 7 women judges to the International Criminal Court

What is CEDAW?



Australia's obligations under CEDAW

WHAT IS CEDAW?

"Ultimately we have to be judged not by our highest ambitions and achievements, but by our ability to raise from the lowest level those whose needs that are greatest. That is the way I would like Australia, and every other country, to be judged in the United Nations."

Australia's Justice Elizabeth Evatt (Member of the CEDAW Committee 1984-1992, Chair of the CEDAW Committee 1989 - 1990) highlighting the importance of CEDAW to ALL countries.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and entered into force on September 2, 1981.

CEDAW has often been described as an 'international bill of NON-DISCRIMINATION rights' for women. Enshrined within its preamble and 30 Articles are key principles of equality and an agenda for national action to end discrimination against women. It is based on the belief that basic human rights include true equality of men and women.

What rights are in CEDAW?

The rights enshrined in CEDAW broadly cover all aspects of women's lives. Rights include political participation, health, education, employment, marriage, family relations and equality before the law. By becoming a party to CEDAW, Australia has committed to take all appropriate measures, including introducing legislation and temporary special measures, so that women can enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

CEDAW defines discrimination against women as

"...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." (Article 1)

The CEDAW Committee:

National governments that have committed to CEDAW are required to submit reports to the CEDAW Committee at least every four years. These reports detail the measures the national government has taken to comply with its obligations. The CEDAW Committee is made up of 23 members elected in their capacity as 'gender experts'. The CEDAW Committee meets twice yearly to address specific topics in CEDAW and monitor individual countries' progress.

The progress of individual countries is measured through the nationally produced reports. To aid the CEDAW Committee in its review, NGOs produce 'shadow reports', which provide an alternative source of information on domestic implementation of CEDAW. The CEDAW Committee then issue 'Concluding Comments' which suggest measures that can be taken to improve implementation of the CEDAW rights in a particular country.

As of October 2000, 166 countries had ratified CEDAW.

NGOs and CEDAW:

NGOs play an active role in the monitoring and implementing of CEDAW by:

- spreading awareness of CEDAW and the rights in it to men and women around the world;
- lobbying governments, businesses and individuals to implement CEDAW;
- compiling 'shadow reports' to the four-yearly national government reports sent to the CEDAW Committee and assisting the Committee with information; and
- providing information to national governments on progress, difficulties and strategies to enable more effective human rights implementation.

Australia's signing of CEDAW

The decision by Australia to sign and later ratify CEDAW was a long process, surrounded by much debate.

Some comments and assertions about CEDAW:

'The convention [CEDAW]... seeks to assert that many women who consider themselves to be both happy and equal in their roles as mothers and wives are not happy... the convention in effect belittles the vital role of these women and consequently the role of their husbands'.

Senator Crichton-Browne, Australian Senate, 9 December 1983.

'From where did the clamour for equality originate? It began in the Eastern Soviet bloc countries, which, while speaking loudly for equality, were not particularly renowned for their practice of human rights. I am sure that Australian women do not want the same rights as women in Iran and India.'

Senator Boswell, Australian Senate, 29 November 1983.



Opposition to CEDAW:

Many Australians feared CEDAW and the effect that it would have on Australian society. Some groups and individuals organised rallies and wrote letters to members of parliament, hoping to influence Australia not to sign. Several parliamentarians went on to voice their opposition to CEDAW in parliament and worked to prevent Australia from signing the Convention.

Opponents argued that CEDAW would force women out of their homes and into the workforce and cause a breakdown of family life. In addition, the fact that the former Soviet Union bloc participated in the UN led some people to believe that Australia signing CEDAW would give these countries the power to make laws for Australia.

Support for CEDAW:

There was strong support for CEDAW from many Australian women's organisations. This support was demonstrated at a national level and also in local branches. These groups included the Federation of Business and Professional Women, the Young Women's Christian Association and Zonta International. Many other NGOs also supported the Convention through the National Council of Women, a voluntary co-ordinating body that at the time had 583 affiliated organisations, representing over 1 million members.

Supporters worked to secure political support for CEDAW. For example, the Women's Electoral Lobby sent letters and had meetings, asking politicians and political candidates to support the Convention. Seminars were held and pamphlets were distributed to publicise CEDAW and inform women, allowing them to see how the Convention could address many issues relevant to their lives.

The signing of CEDAW:

Despite some opposition, Australia signed CEDAW at a special signing ceremony at the UN World Conference for the Decade of Women on 17 July 1980. Australia was one of the 23 countries that helped prepare the ceremony and sent a strong delegation of experts led by The Hon Robert Ellicott (the then Minister for Home Affairs).

Australia's signing of CEDAW, under the Fraser Liberal government, showed Australia's commitment, in principle, to the rights it enshrines. After signing, the Hon Robert Ellicott and the Hon Andrew Peacock (the then Minister for Foreign Affairs) said that the signing evidenced 'Australia's policy of equality for women and the elimination of discrimination.'

A guide to the rights in CEDAW

In signing CEDAW, Australia committed itself to being a society that promotes policies, laws, organisations, structures and attitudes that ensure that women are given the same rights as men. CEDAW facilitates this by promoting non-discriminatory practices in the following areas.

Law, policy and prejudices:

Article 2 urges all countries to work towards eradicating discrimination against women by introducing new laws or policy, changing existing discriminatory laws and providing sanctions for discrimination where it occurs.

Article 3 requires countries to actively promote women's full development and advancement, so that they can enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms on the same basis as men.

Article 4 allows temporary special measures that favour women, on the basis that they are designed to speed up the achievement of equality.

Article 5 requires countries to address and change social and cultural patterns that reinforce the stereotyping of women and traditional gender roles, or that promote the relative superiority or inferiority of either of the sexes.

Exploitation and prostitution:

Article 6 requires countries to aim to eliminate all forms of trafficking of women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

Politics and public life:

Article 7 asserts that women should have the right to vote, the right to stand for election, be involved in formulating government policy and actively participate in political parties, lobby groups and NGOs.

Article 8 states that women should have the same opportunities as men to represent their countries internationally and be involved in the work of international organisations.

Nationality:

Article 9 requires that women have the same rights as men to acquire, retain or change their nationality and the nationality of their children. These rights are not affected by the choices of a woman's husband or changes to his nationality.

Education and training:

Article 10 urges countries to ensure that women have the same opportunities as men in all aspects of education and training - from kindergarten to tertiary education. Women should have access to the same curricula, professional staff and programs of continuing and adult education, especially those aimed at reducing any existing gender gaps within education, and opportunities to benefit from the same scholarships and grants as men. Governments are required to ensure that stereotypical concepts of the roles of men and women are eliminated.



Employment:

Article 11 requires countries to protect women's rights to work, to ensure that women have the same training and employment opportunities as men, that women receive equal pay for work of equal value, that women have access to the same benefits, compensatory schemes, and allowances as men, especially in relation to retirement and incapacity to work.

This Article further requires that countries prohibit discrimination in the workplace on the basis of marriage, pregnancy and maternity, and introduce paid maternity leave without loss of benefits or career opportunities, and encourage the provision of supporting social services to allow parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities.

Health:

Article 12 requires countries to take all necessary measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care and ensure women and men have equal access to health services.

This Article further requires that countries provide free and accessible health services in relation to pregnancy and post-natal care.

Economic life, sport and culture:

Article 13 expressly requires that women have equal access to family benefits, forms of financial credit, including mortgages, and the same rights as men to participate in recreational activities and cultural life.

Women living in remote and rural areas:

Article 14 requires all countries to ensure that the particular needs of rural women are met in relation to access to services, training and employment opportunities, and social equity schemes.

Equality before the law:

Article 15 requires countries to treat women and men equally in all matters relating to the law, including civil matters, contractual matters, and property ownership.

Family relations:

Article 16 requires countries to ensure that women and men have equal rights in the freedom to choose a spouse and enter into marriage; the same rights and responsibilities as men within marriage and upon divorce, especially with regards to choosing a family name, a profession, and the rights of ownership; and equal rights in all matters relating to the birth, adoption and the raising of children.

CEDAW and the Sex Discrimination Act

Since it became a signatory to CEDAW, Australia has developed many mechanisms for enforcing the rights enshrined within this Convention. At the forefront are the mechanisms and ideals provided by the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth). The criminal justice system, the legal system and cultural attitudes, among others, are also utilised for the implementation and enforcement of the rights enshrined in CEDAW.

What is the Sex Discrimination Act?

The Sex Discrimination Act gives effect to some of Australia's obligations. The Sex Discrimination Act was passed in 1984. The parliamentary debate surrounding the enactment was filled with controversy and in some ways resembled the debate that surrounded the signing of CEDAW, as similar views were expressed.

"The sex discrimination bill 1983 contains provisions inconsistent with principles of justice and equality which will be used to undermine civil liberties and religious freedom. It could also be a means of undermining the traditional family structure of our nation."

From a petition presented to the Australian Federal Parliament on December 8, 1983, commenting on introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act.

The Sex Discrimination Act gives effect to some of Australia's obligations under CEDAW and parts of the International Labour Organisation Convention 156. The major objectives of the Sex Discrimination Act are to:

- promote equality between men and women;
- eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status or pregnancy or potential pregnancy at work, in educational institutions, in the provision of goods and services, in the provision of accommodation and the administration of federal programs, and dismissal from work because of family responsibilities; and
- eliminate sexual harassment at work, in educational institutions, in the provision of goods and services, in the provision of accommodation and the administration of federal programs.

In practical terms this means that in Australia it is against the law to discriminate on the basis of sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy. The Sex Discrimination Act also prohibits sexual harassment and dismissal from employment on the basis of family responsibilities. Victimisation associated with any of these grounds is also prohibited. The Sex Discrimination Act makes it clear that in Australia, to live and work in an environment free of sex discrimination and sexual harassment is a human right - not a privilege.



How is the Sex Discrimination Act administered?

The Sex Discrimination Act is administered by the Sex Discrimination Commissioner under the auspices of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Complaints of sex discrimination are made to the President of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Complaints that are not conciliated within the Commission may be taken to the Federal Court or to the Federal Magistrate's Service. The Sex Discrimination Commissioner has responsibility for research, policy and educative work designed to promote greater equality between men and women. Recent projects have concentrated on methods for eliminating discrimination on the ground of pregnancy or potential pregnancy, securing equal remuneration for male and female workers, examining the career options for women in the finance industry, and eliminating sexual harassment from the workplace. The Commissioner also has a broad educational role to highlight the rights of individuals, as well as the responsibility of all members of the community to respect the rights of others and to work cooperatively in developing a fair and cohesive society in Australia.

States and Territories

All states and territories have anti-discrimination legislation in similar terms to the federal law. These laws are administered by state equal opportunity or anti-discrimination bodies.

What is the Optional Protocol to CEDAW?



The Optional Protocol to CEDAW was accepted by the UN General Assembly on 6 October 1999 and opened for signing and ratification by national governments that were parties to CEDAW. Its provisions became operational on 22 December 2000.

The purpose of the CEDAW Optional Protocol is to strengthen the enforcement mechanisms available for the rights within CEDAW. The Protocol provides for complaints to be taken directly to the UN. Although CEDAW represents a strong and valuable statement of women's human rights, it is not always enforced by governments within their domestic legal systems. The rights exist, but they often fail to be enforced.

Complaints procedures such as the Optional Protocol exist under other international Conventions - the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). These optional agreements can be signed and ratified by any national government which is already a party to the original Convention.

The Optional Protocol to CEDAW allows women to bring a complaint about a breach of the rights under CEDAW to the CEDAW Committee. To bring a complaint, it must first be shown that all remedies available through the law in that country have been exhausted. It is important to note that the Optional Protocol does not create new rights, but provides a new enforcement mechanism for existing rights that have been in force since a national government became a party to CEDAW.

Many countries that are parties to CEDAW have established domestic mechanisms to create and enforce the rights within CEDAW. For example, Australia's Sex Discrimination Act embodies many of the rights of CEDAW. However, for the following reasons, the Optional Protocol remains important for all nations, particularly those nations that still have some way to go with respect to implementing the rights of CEDAW domestically.

- The Optional Protocol provides a 'backup' for domestic laws and policies to ensure that they are adequate and effective.
- Domestic laws and policies sometimes have gaps so that some women are not able to exercise or protect their rights - the Optional Protocol ensures that an enforcement mechanism is available.
- In countries with a federalist system, state and federal governments may have separate and independent legislative power. Therefore, the actions of one level of government may be contrary to CEDAW while the other is not. An Optional Protocol would help to ensure that all levels of government in a country find domestic methods to set uniform standards in accordance with CEDAW.
- Governments change, as do systems of power and cultural attitudes. Even though one nation's government may seem supportive of women's rights now, it may not be so in the future. The Optional Protocol provides a mechanism for the ongoing protection of women's rights.
- It is important for nations with good domestic protection for women to become a party to the Optional Protocol to demonstrate leadership for other women from nations with less effective mechanisms.

Using CEDAW as an advocacy tool



There are a variety of ways in which women in Australia can use CEDAW as a tool for structural change and advocacy. When using CEDAW it useful to remember that Australia has been bound by its provision since 1984. The decision to become bound by CEDAW was made by a Liberal Government (Fraser) and the action to become bound by CEDAW was taken by an ALP Government (Hawke). Australia has two reservations, one on paid maternity leave and the other on the participation of women in direct armed combat. It is interesting to note that the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights contains obligations to provide paid maternity leave and Australia has not entered a reservation to that treaty.

Advocacy using CEDAW can be on-going (ie, incorporated into daily campaigns for policy and legislative reform, legal reform etc) and it can also be focused on the reporting process. Australia last reported to the CEDAW Committee in 1997. Our Fifth and Sixth Combined Report was due in August 2000, and is reported to be close to finalisation.

How can we use CEDAW as an advocacy tool?

Through the reporting process of the Government/Committee - Every four years the State Party prepares a report on implementation of their CEDAW obligations. While the report is meant to address positive and negative issues, most commonly it only addresses positive issues. As a result, NGOs prepare Shadow Reports, which help the Committee in their review process. As discussed previously, the Concluding Comments issued by the Committee can then be used by NGOs as part of their domestic-reform agendas.

The overhead included in this section tracks the way in which one issue may move through the reporting process.

Other advocacy uses of CEDAW

- Can be used by specific sectors for lobbying, eg on health, law, violence, trafficking
- Can be used by specific communities and populations for lobbying, eg Indigenous, rural, refugee, CALD
- Provides an international framework for our work
- Addresses systemic nature of discrimination
- Re-frames our 'service delivery' work in human rights terms
- Shifts us from being 'service providers' to advocates
- Expands our networks with other like-minded supporters
- Links our work with the global movement for women's human rights and gender equality
- CEDAW role models the empowerment and agency of women

Women and the United Nations

Beijing fourth world conference on women - platform for action

12 Critical Areas of Concern

1. Women and poverty
2. Education and training of women
3. Women and health
4. Violence against women
5. Women and armed conflict
6. Women and the economy
7. Women in power and decision-making
8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
9. Human rights of women
10. Women and the media
11. Women and the environment
12. The girl-child

Women and the United Nations

Vienna Human Rights Conference

The human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.

The Human Rights Conference recognised the need to :

- integrate women into the UN system
- work for the elimination of discrimination against women
- eradicate violence against women
- integrate women in treaty monitoring processes
- adopt an Optional Protocol to CEDAW
- appoint a Special Rapporteur on violence against women
- address health and education
- promote decision making

Women and the United Nations

International instruments on the rights of women

- Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
- Convention on the Political Rights of Women
- Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict
- Optional Protocol to the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Website: www.unchr.ch/women



Human Rights Glossary

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS: Body formed by the ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC) of the UN to deal with human rights; it is known as principal policy-making body in the international human rights system.

CONVENTION: Binding agreement between states; used synonymously with TREATY and COVENANT. Conventions are stronger than DECLARATIONS because they are legally binding for governments that have signed them. When the UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY adopts a convention, it creates international norms and standards. Once a convention is adopted by the UN General Assembly, MEMBER STATES can then RATIFY the convention, promising to uphold it. Governments that violate the standards set forth in a convention, can then be censured by the UN.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS: Each HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODY issues a set of concluding comments or concluding observations following the meeting or CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE it has with a STATE PARTY to the CONVENTION or COVENANT it is mandated to monitor. Usually concluding observations are structured in the following format: positive factors, factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention/Covenant, principal areas of concern, and recommendations.

CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE: Once a state becomes a party to a CONVENTION, COVENANT or TREATY it is bound to submit periodic reports to the relevant TREATY BODY reporting on the progress it has made. After the periodic report is submitted it meets with the TREATY BODY face to face to orally discuss its implementation process; this is known as a constructive dialogue.

COVENANT: Binding agreement between states; used synonymously with CONVENTION and TREATY. The major international human rights covenants, both passed in 1966, are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW: Law that becomes binding on states although it is not written, but rather adhered to out of custom; when enough states have begun to behave as though something is law, it becomes law 'by use'; this is one of the main sources of international law.

DECLARATION: Document stating agreed upon standards, but that is not legally binding. UN conferences, like the 1993 UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna and the 1995 World Conference for Women in Beijing, usually produce two sets of declarations: one written by government representatives and one by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY often issues influential, but legally NONBINDING declarations.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC): A UN council of 54 members primarily concerned with population, economic development, human rights, and criminal justice. This high-ranking body receives and issues human rights reports in a variety of circumstances.

GENERAL COMMENT/RECOMMENDATION: A document issued by a HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODY that elaborates and interprets an article or a theme from its CONVENTION or COVENANT that it is mandated to monitor.



HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODY: The key human rights CONVENTIONS and COVENANTS give powers to an institution to monitor the STATE PARTIES implementation process. These institutions are known as treaty bodies or treaty committees. There are six key international human rights treaty bodies:

- Committee Against Torture (monitors the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,
- Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (monitors the Covenant on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women)
- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (monitors the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)
- Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (monitors the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination)
- Committee on the Rights of the Child (monitors the Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- Human Rights Committee (monitors the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

INALIENABLE: Refers to rights that belong to every person and cannot be taken from a person under any circumstances.

INDIVISIBLE: Refers to the equal importance of each human rights law. A person cannot be denied a right because someone decides it is 'less important' or 'nonessential'.

INTERDEPENDENT: Refers to the complementary framework of human rights law. For example, your ability to participate in your government is directly affected by your right to express yourself, to get an education, and even to obtain the necessities of life.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (IGOs): Organisations sponsored by several governments that seek to coordinate their efforts; some are regional (e.g., the Council of Europe, the Organisation of African Unity), some are alliances (e.g., the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, NATO); and some are dedicated to a specific purpose (e.g., the UN High Commission for Refugees, UNHCR and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO).

INTERNATIONAL BILL OF HUMAN RIGHTS: The combination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its optional protocol, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

MEMBER STATES: Countries that are members to the United Nations.

NONBINDING: A document, like a DECLARATION, that carries no formal legal obligations. It may, however, carry moral obligations or attain the force of law as INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMARY LAW.

PROTOCOL: A treaty that modifies another treaty (e.g., adding additional procedures or substantive provisions).

RATIFICATION, RATIFY: Process by which the legislative body of a state confirms a government's action in signing a treaty; formal procedure by which a state becomes bound to a treaty after acceptance.

SUMMARY RECORDS: The public records of United Nations meetings. Each TREATY BODY issues a set of summary records following the public meetings it has with STATE PARTIES it is mandated to monitor.

RESERVATION: The exceptions that STATE PARTIES make to a treaty (e.g., provisions that they do not agree to follow). Reservations, however, may not undermine the fundamental meaning of the treaty.

SIGNING, SIGN: In human rights the first step in ratification of a treaty; to sign a DECLARATION, CONVENTION, or one of the COVENANTS constitutes a promise to adhere to the principles in the document and to honour its spirit.

STATE PARTY(IES): Those countries that have RATIFIED a COVENANT or a CONVENTION and are thereby bound to conform to its provisions.

TREATY: Formal agreement between states that defines and modifies their mutual duties and obligations; used synonymously with CONVENTION and COVENANT. When CONVENTIONS are adopted by the UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, they create legally binding international obligations for the MEMBER STATES who have signed the treaty. When a national government RATIFIES a treaty, the articles of that treaty become part of its domestic legal obligations.

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY: One of the principal organs of the UN, consisting of representatives of all MEMBER STATES. The General Assembly issues DECLARATIONS and adopts CONVENTIONS on human rights issues, debates relevant issues, and censures states that violate human rights. The actions of the General Assembly are governed by the United Nations Charter.



Some International Human Rights Standards

UDHR Universal Declaration on Human Rights

ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

ICERD International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

CRoC Convention on the Rights of the Child

CAT Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

PFA Beijing Platform for Action

What to learn more about.....**The United Nations**

www.un.org.au - United Nations home page

CEDAW/CSW

www.un.org.au/daw - the UN Division for the Advancement of Women home page. Info about CEDAW and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

Governments & Parliamentarians**Commonwealth**

www.fed.gov.au - government portal

www.aph.gov.au - parliamentary website

www.aph.gov.au/whoswho/index.htm - contacts for federal parliamentarians

NSW

www.nsw.gov.au - government portal

www.parliament.nsw.gov.au - parliamentary website

www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/web/phweb.nsf/frames/members - contacts for nsw parliamentarians

ACT

www.act.gov.au - government portal

www.legassembly.act.gov.au - parliamentary website

www.legassembly.act.gov.au/members - contacts for act parliamentarians

Vic

www.vic.gov.au - government portal

www.parliament.vic.gov.au - parliamentary website & members

Qld

www.qld.gov.au - government portal

www.parliament.qld.gov.au - parliamentary website

www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Parlib/Members/ - contacts for qld parliamentarians

SA

www.sa.gov.au - government portal

www.parliament.sa.gov.au - parliamentary website

www.parliament.sa.gov.au/members/7_members.shtm - contacts for sa parliamentarians

NT

www.nt.gov.au - government portal

www.nt.gov.au/ntg/parlia.shtml - parliamentary website

www.notes.nt.gov.au/lant/members/Members1.nsf?OpenDatabase - contacts for nt parliamentarians

**WA**

www.wa.gov.au - government portal
www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/home.nsf - parliamentary website
[www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/home.nsf/\(FrameNames\)/Members](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/home.nsf/(FrameNames)/Members) - contacts for wa parliamentarians

Tas

www.tas.gov.au - government portal
www.parliament.tas.gov.au - parliamentary website
www.parliament.tas.gov.au/lc/lclist.htm - contacts for legislative council members
www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ha/halist.htm - contacts for legislative assembly members

Offices of Women's Policy**Commonwealth**

Office for the Status of Women
3 - 5 National Circuit
Barton ACT 2600
ph 02 6271 5722
www.osw.dpmc.gov.au
www.women.gov.au

NSW

The Department for Women
Level 4, Stockland House
181 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
ph 02 9287 1860
www.women.nsw.gov.au
www.womens.gateway.nsw.gov.au

ACT

ACT Office for Women
Multicultural & Community Affairs Group
Chief Minister's Department
GPO Box 158
Canberra ACT 2601
ph 02 6207 2552
www.cmd.act.gov.au/womenact/

Qld

Office for Women
PO Box 185
Albert Street
Brisbane Qld 4002
ph 1800 177 577
www.qldwomen.qld.gov.au

Tas

Women Tasmania
GPO Box 1854
Hobart 7001
ph 1800 001 377
www.women.tas.gov.au

Vic

Office of Women's Policy
Level 3, 1 Treasury Place
Melbourne, VIC 3002
ph 03 9651-0530
www.women.vic.gov.au/owa/owasite.nsf

NT

Office of Women's Policy
GPO Box 4396
Darwin NT 0801

ph 08 8999 6884
www.owp.nt.gov.au

WA

Office for Women's Policy
Hartleys Building
1st Floor
141 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000

ph 1800 199 246
www.womenwa.communitydevelopment.wa.gov.au

SA

Office for the Status of Women
12th Floor
Roma Mitchell House
136 North Terrace
Adelaide S.A. 5000

ph 1800 188 158
www.wis.sa.gov.au

Looking for other women's organisations?

www.nwjc.org.au/womensorgs.html - list of contact details for women's organisations in Australia

Other Useful Websites

www.windowonwomen.gov.au - statistics about women
www.abs.gov.au - general Australian statistics
www.google.com - search engine
www.yahoo.com - search engine



Australia and CEDAW

- Australia has been bound by CEDAW since 1984

- Australia has two reservations
 - the provision of paid maternity leave
 - participation in direct armed combat

- Reported to CEDAW in 1997

- 4th & 5th combined report was due in August 2000

- NGO response to draft report

- Govt Report finalised 2003

- CEDAW Committee will review within 12-24 months of receiving report

- WRANA Community Report and NGO Shadow Report

