



ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP

2 JUN 2010

10/8455, MC10/5305

26 MAY 2010

Ms Christine Brenton
Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace
PO Box A21
ENFIELD SOUTH NSW 2133

Dear Ms Brenton

Thank you for your letter dated 28 February 2010 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, conveying your support for a Human Rights Act. Your letter has been referred me because the issues you raise fall within my portfolio responsibilities.

On 21 April 2010 I launched Australia's Human Rights Framework, which outlines action the Government will take to promote and protect human rights. The Framework is available online at <www.ag.gov.au/humanrightsframework>.

The Framework reaffirms the Government's commitment to human rights and community engagement. It draws on the valuable work undertaken by the National Human Rights Consultation in canvassing the views of the Australian community.

Guided by the Report of the National Human Rights Consultation, education about human rights and responsibilities has been set as the highest priority within the Framework. This recognises that human rights can be protected and promoted effectively only if an understanding of and commitment to human rights becomes a part of everyday life for the community. Community engagement is central to the success of the implementation of the Framework as all Australians will play a vital role in the promotion and improvement of human rights.

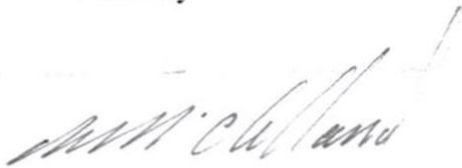
Independent research commissioned by the Consultation Committee showed that 90% of respondents supported enhanced attention by Parliament to human rights issues when making new laws. The Government will now legislate to establish a new Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights and require statements assessing compatibility of new laws with our international human rights obligations to accompany new legislation. Increased Parliamentary scrutiny will ensure public confidence that our laws reflect our human rights obligations.

The Framework does not include a Human Rights Act or Charter. This was a decision that the Government did not take lightly. The issue for the Government was not whether human rights should be protected, but how best to do so.

The Government is aware that concerns were expressed about the possible effects of a Human Rights Act. Rather than developing a legislative charter the Government is focused on ensuring that people understand their human rights and responsibilities and that laws are developed, drafted and considered by Parliament consistent with Australia's international human rights obligations.

Thank you for bringing your views to the attention of the Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Robert McClelland', written in dark ink.

Robert McClelland