

Australian NGOs to make Alternative Report to the UN

DCI-Australia has received widespread support for a proposal to co-ordinate an Alternative (NGO) Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Financial support from Save the Children Fund (Australia) has enabled a prompt start on this major undertaking.

The Australian Government Report is now expected in December. It will be presented immediately to the CRC, but because of a backlog of work, the Committee is not likely to consider Australia until the end of 1996 or even early 1997. A pre-sessional meeting between the Committee, the Australian Government representatives and NGOs by invitation, will take place first and the formal CRC session will take place 3-4 months later.

Already 20 Australian NGOs including NCYLC, NAYLC, OzChild, ACOSS, AYPAC, ACROD, AYPIC, AECA, ACFOA and UNICEF have offered to contribute to the preparation of the Alternative Report.

If you would like more information about this project, contact the DCI office in Canberra (ph 06-247-9395).

Inquiry into Children and the Legal Process

A comprehensive national inquiry into legal processes affecting children as consumers, victims, witnesses and offenders will be conducted jointly by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) and the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC).

The Inquiry will consider what is needed to bring Australia into line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights law. A central issue will be the implementation of Article 12, which requires children's views to be heard in decisions which affect them. The Inquiry will take account of the wide variety of backgrounds and disadvantages which children experience and will focus especially on Aboriginal, migrant, refugee, rural, disabled and disadvantaged children.

The Inquiry, led by Chris Sidoti, Alan Rose and Susanne Tongue, will produce issues and discussion papers and consult widely, particularly with children and young people. The Report is due in June 1997.

Further information is available from HREOC (02-284-9600) and ALRC (02-284-6333)

News from Geneva- If you want it you can get it

DCI's quarterly Newsletter provides information on a regular basis on the activities of the United Nations concerning the protection of the rights of the child. The Newsletter keeps NGOs and government agencies updated on the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (3 sessions per year), as well as on the Commission on Human Rights and other bodies such as the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery; Detention; Optional Protocols etc. The latest issue covers the ninth session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and examines children's issues covered at the Ninth UN Congress on Prevention of Crime and the 51st session of the Commission on Human Rights. A list of Reports due under UNCROC reveals that 32 countries have actually been more tardy in submitting their reports than Australia. Those in the Asia-Pacific region are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Korea and Nepal. Austria, Ireland, Greece and Hungary are also late but not as late as Australia! The DCI Newsletter is available from DCI-Australia for \$25 annual subscription.