

In Brief:

Youth Detention Campaign Success !

"There will be no private juvenile justice facility (under) a Labor Government."

With those words, new Victorian Minister for Community Services, Ms Christine Campbell protected a group of the most vulnerable children and young people in our community from becoming fodder for the profit-driven privatised corrections industry. It is consistent with the position she adopted from the first day that she took on the portfolio as shadow Minister.

DCI-Australia was a lead organisation in the demanding and high profile campaign against the privatisation proposals advanced by the former Minister, Dr. Denis Naphine. Our stance emphasised the glaring gaps in current diversionary systems and community based options, and the grave dangers of physical and emotional harm in a centre built, owned and operated and operated for the purposes of profit.

There is no doubt that the strength of controversy and opposition we helped to generate was a key factor in preventing the former State Government from locking in a private contract arrangement prior to the September 1999 Victorian election.

DCI-Australia congratulates the Minister for taking an anti-privatisation / pro-children's rights stance. We look forward to assisting the new government develop policies and programs that minimise the demand for detention beds.

Watch out for more on this topic in the next edition of Australian Children's Rights News.

National Action Plan on Human Rights

DCI, and other Australian human rights non-government organisations, have said what they think should be covered in Australia's second National Action Plan (NAP) on Human Rights. Australia's first NAP is over five years old and the Attorney General, Daryl Williams, and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander

Downer, have agreed that a new Plan is needed which better reflects the current Government's human rights priorities and approach across the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

DCI is particularly concerned to see that children's rights are fully covered. DCI also joined with other NGOs to urge the Government to adequately address the full range of indigenous rights.

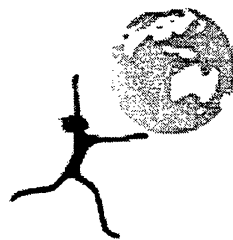
The Plan is expected to be completed next year.

New treaty against child labour

The Republic of Seychelles has become the first country to ratify the new ILO Convention 182, on the Worst Forms of Child Labour which was adopted unanimously in June by the 174 member countries of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The Convention defines the worst forms of child labour as: slavery, or similar practices such as the sale and trafficking of children; debt bondage, serfdom and forced compulsory labour; compulsory recruitment of children in armed conflict; the use of children in prostitution or pornography or in illicit activities such as drug production and trafficking.

When Australia ratifies, which we hope will be very soon, the National Government will be expected to conduct investigations of the situation of working children in this country, to define work which is likely to harm their health, safety or morals and take effective action, such as law reform and preventive programs to stop this harm to children. Such legislation will have to define the minimum age for different kinds of child employment. At present Australia relies on the compulsory education system to protect children from exploitation of their labour and this is clearly ineffective.

The ILO Director-General Juan Somavia has declared his commitment to obtaining widespread and rapid ratification. The treaty tackles an "egregious and unconscionable abuse of human rights," he said.



First International Youth Service Models Conference

An exposé of service responses to challenging youth issues

12 - 15 March 2000

Adelaide Convention Centre, South Australia.

Hosted by the South Australian Government through Youth SA.

Full details at
www.youthchallenges-conf.net

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With a focus on social inclusion, this conference offers an international exposé of practical and cutting edge responses to:

- Young people who are considered to be challenging by youth workers, other service delivery professionals, policy makers, government and/or the community;
- "difficult to resolve" youth issues which continually challenge government and/or the community; and emerging youth issues which confront the community in a problematic way simply because of their "newness".