

# National Human Rights Consultation Submission

AGWW-7R5ASF

**Organisation:** Network of Immigrant and Refugee Women of Australia Inc.

**Submission Text:**

We are submitting views on the three key questions:

1. Which human rights and responsibilities should be protected and promoted?

The international obligations, asylum seekers, children and women in detention. The rights and protection of immigrant workers and their families who come under the skilled migration and 475 visas to have equal opportunities, decent working conditions, free from exploitation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that these rights are protected. For Australian government to ratify and sign the Convention on the Protection of Immigrants and their Families.

Also the rights of all Australian citizens to have security of income, safety, shelter, reasonable standard of living and without poverty. For Aboriginal people, rights to their land, cultures, languages, equal rights to resources and services.

Minority migrant groups rights to their languages, culture, religious considerations to be promoted and protected and these considerations to be included in all facets of the government and non-government service delivery.

For immigrant and refugee women to have equal rights and access to opportunities, language learning, cultural and religious considerations at the workplace, in service delivery, and the right to have their voices heard by the government, the community and the women's movement to enable them to participate in decision making levels, and their needs and interests and rights to be included in policies and the government's agenda. For them to have a national voice by the government considering their request for a CALD Women's National Alliance now that the government and the Office of Women are reviewing the National Women's Secretariats or Alliances.

2. Are human rights sufficiently protected and promoted?

No. The majority of people do not know about human rights, therefore, unable to understand these rights and access them or complain if they are breached. It is the domain of legal, advocacy groups and the everyday person does not have any idea. In this way, it is difficult for people to realise what is their human rights. Not much promotion is being done for ordinary people to be aware. The promotion which is being done reaches only a few people but the message does not get down to the local level and "grass roots" level.

No they are not protected because the international instruments are not included in legislation at State level as well as Commonwealth. Therefore, governments cannot act on this legislation outside their jurisdiction.

3. How could Australia better protect and promote human rights?

Have a bill or Rights or have these enshrined in the Constitution and this to be common to the three levels of government.

To promote it provide information on human rights in simple language to be understood by the people. Teach human rights as a compulsory subject according to the age of the children from early childhood to primary, high school and at tertiary levels.

Something needs included to curtail the power of the governments not to accede to parts of conventions and people cannot do anything about it. Also the government not to be able to suspend parts of the Human Rights Act as is the case with the NT Aboriginal land right and social security Intervention and people who are affected cannot complain or do something about it.

This becomes harder because the United Nations which is the body which is supposed to monitor the implementation and performance of each country on the various convention cannot interfere in the internal affairs of nations and at times it is too late when they do somehow do something about this. The only thing they can do is to make countries report on their progress of implementing the conventions and making recommendations and considering alternative reports from NGO's. This situation was experienced during the children and women in detention issue and the asylum seekers which caused so much hardship to so many people and Australians international reputation suffered badly.

Also the UN structure has to change to reflect the times as many of its mechanisms structures are anachronistic and controlled by an elitist group of people who often do not have any concept or understanding of the people whose human rights are blatantly abused. There is need for it as an organisation to change and give opportunities to people whose rights are violated to be heard directly and not through people who do not represent their views and interests.