Blind eyes and ethics overboard: A modest proposal[1] for an Australian human rights regime

Call to Country

First let me acknowledge that we meet on country traditionally owned by the Aboriginal people, and the elders who are the custodians of that land today.

Blind eyes

More than two years ago we were told by honorable men[2], and we honestly believed that desperate asylum-seekers had thrown their children overboard. The Prime Minister won an election on the back of his revulsion against 'such people'. It wasn't true.

At around the same time, about 365 would-be asylum seekers boarded an unseaworthy ship which we eventually called the SIEV-X – a suspect illegal entry vessel which Australian surveillance authorities number when it arrives: this did not. This doomed boat set off from Indonesia horribly overloaded and in poor condition, and did not arrive. As half-expected, it had foundered, we now know in international waters en route to Australia. Over the next day or two the people drowned while Australian surveillance planes flew overhead, whose crew had not been told to keep an eye out for people in the water by the authorities receiving regular briefing on the supposed whereabouts and fate of their boat, in Canberra. As Nelson is supposed to have said, 'I see no signal.'

Australians continue to turn a blind eye to suffering particularly the suffering of children in immigration detention. I was appalled to see a newspaper poll in

[1] Apologies to Jonathon Swift's 'Modest Proposal' for the elimination of famine in Ireland.
[2] Apologies to William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Marc Antony's funeral oration.

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which 75% or more thought that detaining such children indefinitely was acceptable government policy. We compulsorily detain all asylum seekers in this country, though in a civilized country detention is supposed to be a punishment for a properly convicted criminal, not an administrative practice for handling a class of people. The vast majority of the 'illegal non citizens', to use the Orwellian language of our times, who have been 'processed' on Nauru or Manus or Christmas Islands since, have been accepted as genuinely seeking refuge from a well-founded fear of persecution. Nonetheless we have tried to remove their rights to challenge their detention through extraordinary and as the High Court has found unconstitutional legislation.

Thank God for the Constitution, then? Well, no. Our government is planning further legislation to 'get around' the High Court's finding in that case, and to remove judicial review of refugee claims more effectively.

I'm not a single issue advocate, here. My issue is the rule of law and the protection of the rights of all children. Our history of the treatment of children in Australia has long been inadequate, to put it at its best. The fact is that our social and legal systems are just not suitable to deal with the protection of children's human rights. They are not even capable of giving a remedy for great wrongs done to children who, on surviving into adulthood, approach them.

Just a few years ago in a case called Cubillo and Gunner v. The Commonwealth, two Australian Aboriginals who were taken from their family, kindred and culture in the Northern Territory when they were children, failed in the Australian Federal Court to establish even the right to sue for civil damages for the acts of government agents who took them away as part of a forced assimilation process, then went on to place at least one of them in the hands of child abusers. The removal was 'legal' at the time, the removal policy was neither explicit nor unlawful at the time either, and the witnesses to the facts were simply not to be

found, so many years later. So a sympathetic judge rejected the right to any remedy of two acknowledged members of the 'Stolen Generation'.

Late last year as I reported in an article in Eureka Street, an Aboriginal woman and her biographer discovered evidence that the removal of hundreds of Western Australian Aboriginal children from their parents from January 1937 onwards was not only unlawful, but known to be unlawful to the Minister of the day. The practice continued until the 1960s.

We have had to rely far too much on the integrity and imagination of judges to find ways around such obstacles to the protection of the rights of vulnerable people. There are no limits on what the executive side of government may decide to be its policy nor on what Parliaments may make laws about, including acts that we now consider to be callous at worst and dreadfully mistaken at best, other than our Constitution. The Australian Constitution is silent on the matter of 'rights' – other than States' rights. Human rights were left to the protection of the Common Law when the Constitution was drawn up and, at the dawn of the 20th century Australia became a federation.

But during that century Australia signed international human rights treaties. These are not considered to be part of the Common Law nor become part of Australia's law unless we pass statutes that make them so. Yet these treaties influence both our laws of natural justice and procedural fairness –as the High Court said in the Teoh case, and they also affect, it seems, Australian courts' powers to act when children are being harmed.

In late June 2003 the Family Court of Australia made a courageous decision – and I mean that in the 'Yes Minister' sense. In deciding an appeal against a single judge's refusal to deal with the recorded suffering of the children of asylum seekers – or unaccompanied asylum seekers themselves, who may spend virtually the whole of their life behind bars because they came here without

permission - the Full Court found that it had the authority to review their detention, because Australia had signed an international human rights treaty, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and it was the only court that could exercise the human rights obligation to review the wellbeing of children even if they happened to be children without the right papers. Sometimes a right is so important that it cannot be denied to any person.

It was courageous, because the Commonwealth has turned on the Family Court and taken the matter on appeal to the High Court, where the decision did not survive for entirely technical reasons: the Family Court does not have the constitutional power to review the detention of children under immigration legislation, no matter how draconian.

It is an important principle that children who may well be severely traumatized by their detention should continue to be detained: immigration policy. No government wants the UNCRC to be a part of Australian law. It is an inconvenience and an obstacle to other policy imperatives. The Attorney General has made it clear that he would prefer that the Family Court was a residual jurisdiction, and the Minister for Immigration that children should remain entirely without judicial protection if they came here without permission. It is a matter of principle.

Today I speak from an unapologetic position as an advocate of human rights. I am fundamentally a citizen who distrusts the placing of too much power in too few hands.

I have practised as both barrister and solicitor for 32 years. I have held statutory offices established by governments to protect the human right to live free from discrimination, as the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity in Victoria and as Acting Commissioner in Western Australia, and as a hearings commissioner of

the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission ('HREOC'). I am an anti-corruption Commissioner in WA.

Knowing how statutory watchdogs can be contained, abolished or made dysfunctional makes me sensitive to the need for fundamentally better ways to protect the rights of citizens against their rulers.

I have also held a non-statutory human rights post, as the first Director of an Office of London Children's Rights Commissioner, established in 1999 as a non-government 'children's rights commissioner' for London, working with the new regional government for London, the Greater London Authority. The Office was established to make the case for effective government institutions for children by doing what human rights commissioners for children do, without any statutory powers.

This was an exciting time, because in the middle of 2000 the UK fully implemented the Human Rights Act 1998. I watched the slow flowering of a long-moribund Common Law culture begin under the influence of the UK's international human rights treaties.

Children's Rights Commissioners?

I would like to make it perfectly clear here, that I am not advocating the establishment of a Children's Commissioner – unless it is part of a human rights regime.

In Australia, such Commissioners have come to be associated with child protection, a much more limited role than we modeled in London. What is necessary is to make governments consider human rights while making policy, not asking for a judicial remedy afterwards

It is deeply disappointing that no political leader appears to have understood what the proper role of a human rights agency is, including the federal Opposition, whose recent bill to establish a Commonwealth 'children's commissioner' – not a 'children's rights commissioner' - reverts to a limited role child protection role and the detection of pedophiles, which has made no difference in the political and social attitude to the rights of children.

There are many ways of protecting human rights and freedoms. Creating lists or hectoring sympathetic audiences does not do it. Relying on the Common Law or special, limited statutes such anti-discrimination is not enough either. Leaving it the courts is always risky – though there was a brief window of activity in the High Court in the 1990s. The function of judges and courts in developing the Law by referring to human rights treaties where those rights are clearly and directly affected[3] is a legitimate and important influence on the rule of law[4], but that is not how governments see it. It has long been a feature of Australian political life to attack courts and judges that do consider the rights of unpopular groups such as prisoners, offending children, and asylum-seekers.

There is nothing to prevent governments acting in ways, or creating or implementing policies or proposing laws that breach our international obligations, except the political process and, from time to time, the determinations of judges interpreting laws and behaviours.

It was because children's groups wanted something better than the Common Law to protect the rights of children that the Office of the Children's Rights Commissioner for London was established in 1999.

[3] Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs v Teoh 183 CLR 273, per Mason CJ and Deane J at 287. See also Kartinyeri v Commonwealth (1998) 195 CLR 337 at 384 per Gummow and Hayne JJ.
[4] Mabo v Queensland (No 2) (1992) 175 CLR 1, 42, per Brennan J (Mason CJ and McHugh agreeing)

Office of Children's Rights Commissioner for London

The office was set up to demonstrate what a children's rights commissioner could do for the quality of government decision making for the new regional government of London, the Greater London Authority. It was to be a non-government 'children's rights commissioner' and demonstrate what is necessary to make government effective for children.[5]

It was, from the beginning, an Office driven by the priorities and concerns of children. It was not established by the GLA. We had to work to be accepted as a contractual partner by the Mayor. Children were involved in decision-making about the Office from the beginning and showed how children's participation in 'adult' processes affecting them could easily be done. The Office was created when its Advisory Board of children and young people was appointed in October 1999. The Board members, aged between 7-8 and 15, appointed the staff and approved the business plan and met monthly. They spoke for the Office and its work. Everything was done on the basis that Article 12 of the UNCRC requires children's participation in decision-making.

Our objective was, to help the new regional government of London make better laws and policies affecting children, through the involvement of children. We did not look for better child protection laws, or try to set up symbolic 'children's parliaments' or children's art shows and cute t-shirts. Ours was the European ombudsman model, an advocate for children at the policy level with government, to help the new regional government of London plan and evaluate the effect on children of mainstream policies including housing, culture, public transport, police, and public safety, environmental, planning and economic development.
We succeeded, in partnership with children and the Mayor of London in:

[5] See www.londonchildrenscommissioner.org.uk

- Developing the first children's strategy for London (launched 8th April 2003) based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and including a Child Impact Analysis model
- Researching and publishing the first State of London's Children Report (putting together all the published and un published data on what it is like to be a child in London, for planners and policy-makers – and using direct voices of children as the structure
- Developing models and techniques for involving children from 4 to 17 in consultation and feedback on government policy and participation in civic life
- Attaining the Mayor's approval to establishing a funded office for children to take up where the Office of Children's Rights Commissioner for London left off

This is an admirable first step, and it could be tried in Australia's states and territories – with a much smaller population and simpler governmental structure. The model for protecting the rights of children: to the *provision* of a decent quality of life; to *protection* from harm and maltreatment, and to *participate* and influence the outcome.[6] – is not as simple as creating a 'commissioner'. And it came from a conservative culture and the legal and political system that gave birth to our own.

In the UK children's rights are not a dirty word. There is a willingness to discuss their human rights and participation that is lacking in Australia. In part this is because the UK has been subject to human rights evaluation ever since it joined the European Common Market. Children's Rights Commissioners are a European invention, and a significant step to improving children's status.

The lamentable state of children's rights in Australia

Let me now look briefly at the way the law protects the rights of children in Australia.

[6] These are the three general groupings of rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Common Law assumes that children are persons 'under a disability,' and makes some provision for their interests to be protected by natural guardians – parents and other kin – and, as a last resort, by the state.
What our system does not do is ensure that there is someone with an enforceable duty to ensure that children's rights are protected. Sometimes this matters a lot.

We have moral rules saying that we shouldn't be cruel to children; legal rules saying that parents should not neglect or abandon them either; special judicial arrangements to sort out parental duties when necessary and guardianship provisions when parents fail or flee. We have a body of professional literature and research on what 'good' parenting is and where the state may or should intervene in children's lives.

We also have decades of Royal Commissions and Inquiries into the failure of the lot of them.

The Law does not protect those rights, nor will it, until those rights can be put to the people, the policy makers and the courts as entitlements, when the Law will find someone and place the responsibility upon them to protect them. Some say that if there is no effective remedy for the breach of a 'right' it does not really exist. But as MacCormack [7]has pointed out, sometimes a 'right' is so clearly *'. . . of such importance that it would be wrong to deny it or withhold it from any member'* of our human society. It must exist and a remedy must be found, and the person who ought to fulfil the duties attached to it should be identified.

There is a popular view that children don't have rights unless they possess a balancing responsibility. This old argument – a silly one - is based on a simplistic

[7] MacCormack N. Children's Rights: a Test-Case, in Legal Rights and Social Democracy: Essays in Legal and Political Philosophy. Clarendon Press. Chapter 8, PP 154-156. 1982

understanding of what a long-dead philosopher called Hohveld[8] wrote, before the development of modern human rights jurisprudence and without an appreciation of the state's ethical obligations to 'non-persons' and before the evolution of our understanding of the social importance of the Law.

We cannot leave children's rights protection to parents alone. Some of them cannot and others will not protect them. The argument was put a long time ago by John Stuart Mill[9] – that would be unjust to punish children for their parents' irresponsibility, poor judgment or poverty. We must provide ways to ensure that children's rights are protected, not only through their families.

The Common Law is not a ready tool for this. Yet it can be when human rights principles are introduced into consideration.

One recent example has come from England after the Human Rights Act was passed. In one case decided on 13th February 2001[10]the law about a convicted person's right to have 'spent convictions' overlooked - the about-to-be-released felon's 'expired' convictions for child sexual offences were communicated to child welfare authorities by the prison governor - was interpreted in light of the legitimate expectation that the UK government intended to protect children from the risk of abuse when it ratified UNCRC and that the Human Rights Act 1998 brought this into the equation. The prison regulations may have been silent about the rights of children, but the court took as its starting point Article 19 of UNCRC by which, the court said, it could be assumed the UK government intended to be bound when it ratified the Convention.

[8] Hohveld W.N. Fundamental Legal Conceptions as Applied in Judicial Reasoning. Yale University Press, New Haven. 1919.

[9] Mill, J.S. On Liberty. Everyman's Library, London. 1906.

*31.*R v. Governor of Dartmoor Prison. Unreported decision, AD of the QBD, Turner J. 13 February 2001.

This is exactly what the Australian High Court said in Teoh[11] when it ruled that it was procedurally unfair for immigration officials who planned to deport the father of dependent, Australian-born children not to advise that it was not intended to take into account Australia's UNCRC undertaking not to separate a child from their parent without their consent, and to have regard to their best interests as a paramount consideration.

How embarrassing that both Labor and Coalition Attorneys General decided to act to set aside that expectation, in not only the case of children's rights, but all human rights.

ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN

This brings me to a classic instance of the law's evident failure to protect the most vulnerable human of all: the child who, without parents, family or even a community, seeks asylum.

We have a particular obligation to children, not only in international law - we ratified UNCRC 1990 (and the Refugee Convention in 1954) - but because of their 'natural' dependency. Yet we have abdicated our responsibility and scrabble to avoid responsibility for a clearly unfair situation: children detained indefinitely with strangers because someone has made a decision for them.

We are faced with a moral choice. Sometimes a 'right' is so clearly so important that it would be wrong to deny it or withhold it from any person. The Law should find a remedy and vest someone with a duty to exercise it.

There is no need, nor right, to lock away hundreds of children in immigration detention, with adults. Many of these children have been detained in difficult, deleterious and (for some) dangerous conditions for months or years already.

[11] Teoh v. Minister for Immigration already cited.

They have no family life. The conditions under which we detain them not only breach international guidelines for the detention of prisoners, let alone children but quite possibly our international obligations under the 1987 Convention Against Torture or other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment and Punishment.

That Convention defines "torture" as any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on someone by way of punishment, the intimidation or coercion of themselves or a third person, or for a discriminatory reason, inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a person acting in an official capacity.

We are detaining children in order to deter people-smugglers they have never met and asylum-seekers of the future, in conditions calculated to do them permanent harm. And that is why the Family Court has determined that it has the jurisdiction to oversight their detention.

Other legal avenues have failed. Let me give you an example. The Federal Court was asked to review a single judge's decision made late in 2001 with regard to the refusal of the Refugee Review Tribunal in WA to approve two children's applications for visas because they had been made out of the mandatory and fixed time limits set by the Migration Act.[12]

They challenged the law on the basis that they were children and such time limits should not apply to those unable to exercise their rights, as children can't. As unaccompanied children, their interests should have been protected by their guardian. Their guardian was the Minister for immigration, under Section 6 of the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act. They tried to argue that the Minister was under a duty to protect the interests of the child, which included giving

[12] Federal Court of Australia W373 and 378 of 2001 Simon Odhiambo and Peter Martizi v Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. See HREOC's submissions at www.humanrights.gov.au/legal/guidelines/submission_martizi.html

advice on their entitlements and opportunities in a timely way, and that this should take priority over the Minister's conflicting interests in applying immigration legislation that mandated and legitimated their detention.

The case failed because the judge found that the legislation did not create a conflict between the interests of the Minister as immigration minister and children's guardian. The Minister had successfully delegated his 'child care' responsibilities to state welfare authorities. However, child welfare authorities had not established a regime to ensure they knew which children were under their responsibility in detention or to give them timely or any legal advice or support. It was remarkable that the particular child had exercised the power in the circumstances but even that worked against him. He had shown he was mature by making the application (late) and so he did not need 'special protection.'

Two modest proposals for the States and Territories

Since the Commonwealth will not act to protect the rights of children and other vulnerable people and since the courts are having problems with their powers and discretions we must look to the states and the territories for some remedy.

One of the reasons children's rights are taken seriously in the UK is that they have been taken to the European Human Rights Commission and later to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Under the Human Rights act, they can now be argued as entitlements in the mainstream British courts. There is a mechanism by which the Law will find someone and place the responsibility upon them to claim children's and other human rights.

I have two 'modest proposals' to make

The first is really simple. Each State and Territory could change their statutory interpretation Acts in a uniform way, to require judges to consider the obligations

that Australia has undertaken under international human rights treaties set out in the Schedule. The Schedule would reproduce the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. That is very like the European Convention on Human Rights which is implemented in the UK. Human Rights Act, which provides for basic guarantees such as fair trials, freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention.

This would enable the High Court when considering appeals against the decisions of state courts to take those human rights obligations into account. In this way, those obligations are taken into account by judges and magistrates and government officials in each of the states and territories where they have political and constitutional power, and thus part of the Common Law of those states and territories, in a 'common' or shared way.

This would be a very simple step, and could happen at once.

Modest proposal number two, is to develop our own Human Rights Act regime. The decision to implement the UK's political obligations within Europe by creating a uniquely Common Law approach to human rights happened without fanfare when most of the European Convention on Human Rights ('ECHR') became a part of its domestic law [13] when the Human Rights Act came fully into effect on 2nd October 2000.

This is how it works.

The Human Rights Act places requirements on 'public authorities' to act in a way that is compatible with all ECHR rights: this includes government ministers, local authorities, tribunals and 'any person certain of whose functions are functions of a public nature'.

[13] Articles 2-12 and 14 of the *Convention* and 103 of the 1st Protocol and 1 and 2 of the 6th Protocol. There are qualifications to most Articles and Article 14 (prohibiting discrimination) is applicable only to discrimination with respect to civil rights under the Convention and in conjunction with other Articles.

New legislation must be introduced into Parliament with a statement by the relevant Secretary that it does – or does not - comply with the ECHR.

British Courts must interpret UK law so it is, if at all possible, consistent with the Convention. They must have regard to decisions of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, and of other national courts interpreting the same human rights principles, both under other international treaties and foreign human rights laws.

This does not subject British courts to foreign notions of fairness. In many instances the courts have to take account of the 'margin of appreciation' in applying ECHR rights to British culture and circumstances – that is, the differences in how those principles operate in different social and legal frameworks.

If primary legislation is incompatible with ECHR rights, a higher court can make a 'declaration of incompatibility'.[14] All that does, if the Government accepts the declaration or a ruling by the European Court, is enable Ministers to change incompatible legislation by a speedy 'remedial order' without need to take an amendment in a Bill through Parliament. In that way, Parliamentary sovereignty is preserved.

If the Government does not agree with the court's declaration, an aggrieved person may take the matter to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. This is the element we do not have in Australia. The UK has long been subject to the (non-binding but politically embarrassing) findings of the European Human Rights Commission and Court. This has had a remarkable educational effect – the language of human rights is not 'strange' to the reading population – and helped to support the domestic human rights regime, giving

[14] The courts can set aside subordinate legislation, such as rules and regulations, if found incompatible, as long as the governing primary legislation does not specifically require the incompatibility.

British courts the primary responsibility for determining the extent to which British laws and agencies comply with the international standards and statements of human rights principles, instead of 'Strasbourg' and the Europeans..

Some of the ECHR Articles, included in the statute – quite like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Australia has signed - are absolute, such as the right to life and prohibition of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Articles 2 and 3).

Others are limited in their terms - the right to liberty and security and the right to participate in a fair, public and impartial tribunal (Articles 5 and 6).

A third, broad group contains 'qualified' rights – those that must be balanced against the wider public interest (Articles 8-11), which include the right to respect for private and family life and freedom of thought, conscience and religion. These are to be interpreted having regard to four questions (after a finding that at least on its face the 'right' under one of the ECHR provisions has been interfered with):

- Is the interference in accordance with the law?
- Is the interference in pursuance of a legitimate aim?
- Is it necessary in a democratic society? and
- Is it proportionate (to the risk or harm it is intended to meet)?

These are the debates Australia needs to have, in an impartial arena rather than the poisonous political one. The new process is democratic, inviting public scrutiny and debate on crucial issues of trust and responsibility. It seems not to have initiated a landslide of trivial litigation. It has, at times, inconvenienced administrators. But it has resulted in faster decisions, in an impartial arena, of key issues which we deal with very poorly in the political one.

For example, in September 2001 a single judge in the Administrative Court ruled that it was unlawful for government automatically to detain asylum-seekers upon entry to the UK pending 'fast-track' determination of their claim.[15] The right to liberty of the person is a qualified right under the Convention. The Secretary of State for the Home Office appealed, and won the appeal[16]. What was exemplary was the process of decision-making, and how it contributed to a public understanding of the issues.

The Court assessed the lawfulness of the initial detention; and the purpose, necessity (in a democratic society) and proportionality of a policy of detaining asylum seekers for up to 10 days to expedite decisions on their applications for asylum[17]; the likelihood of absconding and the effect on efficiency, and that detention conditions were appropriate for asylum seekers rather than convicted prisoners. Having considered it all the appeal court concluded that a (very short) period of detention was not an unreasonable price to pay for speedy resolution of asylum claims.

We could, and should, be able to review our treatment of refugees in the same way in Australia. This isn't possible. Because Australia has no human rights regime, no "bill of rights", no settled understanding of how Australia's international human rights obligations should direct government administrators in their responsibilities or the interpretation of laws that clearly infringe them but are validly passed and may be intended to have such effect, no Human Rights Act mechanism, these issues are decided according to general principles of statutory interpretation, and loose considerations of public policy.

Conclusion

[15] R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte (1) Shayan Baram Saadi, (2) Shenar Fazi Maged, (3) Dilshad Hassan Osman and (4) Rizgan Mohammed. QBD Administrative Court (Collins J) 7/9/2001.

[16] R v Secretary Of State For The Home Department, Ex Parte (1) Shayan Baram Saadi (2) Zhenar Fazi Maged (3) Dilshad Hassan Osman (4) Rizgan Mohammed (2001) [2001] EWCA Civ. 1512, 17/10/01

[17] Art.5 (1) (f) of the European Convention on Human Rights recognised the right of states to detain those who sought entry to those states. Proportionality arose in terms of how long the detention was to be for.

Civil and human 'rights' are only realized in fact when they become mainstreamed and 'normalised.' There is no reason why States and Territories should not start this process within their own jurisdictions and their constitutional share of legislative power – the peace, order and good government of this state, its civil and criminal and procedural laws; its administrative arrangements and expectations of its public servants – its child protection powers and duties.

The process has already begun: recently the ACT government was presented with a report from a Committee of Professor Charlesworth recommending the implementation of recommendations[18] based on the UK Human Rights Act model.

If we were to use the ICCPR as the UK has domesticated the ECHR, we could enable and require State and Territory public servants to think about their human rights obligations as they worked, and judges and magistrates, when interpreting their own statutes and the acts and omissions of their own officers, to have regard to international standards of human rights protections. There could be an informed debate about the legitimacy of our laws and policies by measuring them against the universal norms of our international human rights obligations.

Geoffrey Robertson wrote in his 1998 book, Crimes Against Humanity:

"*The idea that people, wherever in the world they happen to be, possess a few basic rights that no political order can take away, has had a momentous impact on modern civilisation*

I want to live in a decent society. I believe that Australians are decent people. This is how to create a society worth living in, and worth fighting for.

[18] The full text is available at www.jcs.act.gov.au/prd/rights/index.html