



ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP
MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN
THE HON TANYA PLIBERSEK MP

MEDIA RELEASE

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**RUDD GOVERNMENT ACTS TO PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN
IN AUSTRALIA**

Attorney-General Robert McClelland and Minister for Housing and the Status of Women Tanya Plibersek have today welcomed a significant step forward in the protection and promotion of women's rights in Australia.

The Rudd Government has tabled a National Interest Analysis, which proposes that Australia accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

"Acceding to the Optional Protocol demonstrates the Rudd Government's positive re-engagement with the United Nations after many years of inaction on a number of important international instruments," Mr McClelland said.

"If Australia is to be taken seriously when it comes to international human rights, then it's important that we impose on ourselves the same high standards we expect of our neighbours."

The Optional Protocol allows Australians to make complaints to the United Nations about the protection of women's rights and gender equality when all domestic avenues for review have been exhausted.

In preparing the National Interest Analysis, a wide-ranging consultation was conducted with the States, Territories and Non-Government Organisations.

"The Government received a high number of positive responses from women's groups and community organisations," Ms Plibersek said.

"By signing up to the optional protocol, Australia places itself as a global leader when it comes to women's rights."

The previous Government refused to become a party to the Optional Protocol, which came into force in 2000.

The proposal to accede to the Optional Protocol will now be considered by Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, which will report by 10 November 2008.

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