



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

I welcome the opportunity to offer my support for the National Conference on Human Rights Education being hosted by the University of Western Sydney.

My Government understands that a culture of human rights is critical to a democratic society and to the protection of the rights of all Australians – ensuring that everyone, no matter their background or beliefs, has a fair go.

We have demonstrated strong commitment to human rights by actions such as the national apology to Indigenous Australians, the *'Closing the Gap'* initiatives, same-sex reforms, ratifying the United Nations Disabilities Convention and ensuring more humane treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

In addition, as a result of the work of the National Human Rights Consultation Committee, the Government is establishing a new Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to scrutinise legislation for compliance with our international human rights obligations, as well as requiring all new legislation to be accompanied by a statement of compatibility with our international human rights obligations.

The Consultation Committee's report noted that: "Human rights can be protected and promoted effectively only if an understanding of and commitment to human rights have become a part of everyday life for all in the community." That is why we are also investing over \$12 million in a comprehensive suite of education initiatives to promote a greater understanding of human rights across the nation.

I hope all participants enjoy a constructive and informative conference which will help make a valuable contribution to ongoing efforts in Australia and internationally to build a stronger understanding of human rights.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Gillard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

The Honourable Julia Gillard MP
Prime Minister of Australia