



**DNI** Defensa de los Niños Internacional

**DCI** Defence for Children International (Australia)

**DEI** Défense des Enfants International

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE DCI-A ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

5:00pm 25 November 2004

at Level 6, Number 1 Elizabeth Street Melbourne  
at Level 2, 311 Castlereagh Street Sydney

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DCI-A has continued to advocate on national issues and some international issues in relation to the rights of children and young people. DCI-A has been involved in a number of debates via submissions, letters, and *Australian Children's Rights News* in relation to child-rights focussed positions concerning:

- The treatment of children and young people seeking asylum
- Access to assisted reproductive technologies
- Law reform concerning same-sex relationships in Victoria
- Legal representation of children in Children's Courts and the Family Court.

The final report by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission on their Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention was released mid 2004, and Barbara Rogalla represented DCI-A and contributed to the preparation of a series of related papers as submissions to this inquiry, summarised by Barbara in several articles for *Australian Children's Rights News*.

Danny Sandor prepared a submission on behalf of DCI-Australia to the Victorian Law Reform Commission in response to the consultation paper *Assisted Reproductive Technology and Adoption: Should the Current Eligibility Criteria in Victoria be Changed?*

Danny also attended UN Crime Commission and lobbied on behalf of DCI for the draft resolution to specifically acknowledge the particular vulnerabilities of children in prison and the need to ensure that detention centres for young people were included as targets for the programs. The delegations of Canada, Portugal and The Netherlands came on-board. At DCI's suggestion, the Netherlands supported by Canada opportunely proposed that all references to "prisons" should include the additional words "and juvenile detention facilities". The US delegation were opposed to specific mention of children and prison, and Danny's view was that the final resolution did not protect children in prisons. Danny left for overseas in early August and is now living in Budapest and working for George Soros, again in relation to human rights.



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The major work that DCI-A is now involved in is the preparation of a second Alternative Report in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. DCI-A is collaborating with the National Children's and Youth Law Centre (NCYLC) and have produced a consultation paper and a background paper which are available via both DCI's website at <http://www.dci-au.org/html/news.html#croc> and NCYLC's website <http://www.ncylc.org.au/croc/consultpaper.html> based on considerable work by Robert Ludbrook, another DCI-A member.

Consultations were held in collaboration with the community legal centres network in most states and the final report is now being prepared with the draft expected to be ready by end of March. Several members of DCI-A or the Advisory Panel (Richard Chisholm, Moira Rayner, Phillip Adams and Judy Cashmore) are working on the draft report or are members of the high-powered Advisory Committee which includes Malcolm Fraser, Marcus Einfeld and Julian Disney.

## Acknowledgments

DCI (Australia) continues to be very appreciative of the accommodation and office assistance provided at minimal cost by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic).

Particular thanks are due to two people who continue to keep the wheels of the organization running:

- First, to Helen Mattick, a long-standing and loyal volunteer based in Canberra who continues to keep our books in order and deals with the correspondence and membership subscriptions etc. I am very grateful for her wonderful work and willing assistance.
- Second, to our webmaster, Mr. Chris Cody of Webenter, for maintaining and updating our website [www.dci-au.org](http://www.dci-au.org). Chris has also continued to provide the electronic formatting for the *Australian Children's Rights News (ACRN)* beginning with the September 2001 issue. He has done this cheerfully for a number of issues on an honorary basis but we are now to pay him a small honorarium at rates well below market rates.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the National Committee. We have all been challenged by other commitments so it has been difficult at various times to keep things moving and to provide the time and energy that is needed. Hopefully we will be able to call upon the resources of others across Australia to provide some new direction and energy in the coming year.

Judy Cashmore  
2003-2004 President  
DCI-A.