



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP**

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**RUDD GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS
CONSULTATION**

Attorney-General Robert McClelland has today marked the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by launching the National Human Rights Consultation to seek the community's views on human rights in Australia.

The Consultation will be conducted by a Committee of four eminent Australians:

- Father Frank Brennan SJ AO (Chair)
- Mick Palmer AO APM
- Mary Kostakidis, and
- Tammy Williams

Mr McClelland said the consultation implements another Rudd Government election commitment and provides an opportunity for all Australians to share their views on how human rights and responsibilities can be better recognised and protected.

"All Australians will be given the chance to have their say. Whatever views are presented, we want to hear from as many Australians as possible and to stimulate a national discussion about this important topic."

"The consultation does not presuppose any outcome, although the Government has made it clear that any proposal must preserve the sovereignty of Parliament. We want to encourage broad community debate on a range of human rights issues, not only on whether a Charter or Bill of Rights is necessary."

The Committee will report to the Government by 31 July 2008. Biographies of the Committee members are attached.

Further information on the consultation, including how to make a submission, is available at: <http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au>.

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Father Frank Brennan is a Jesuit priest, a Professor of Law at the Australian Catholic University and Visiting Professorial Fellow at the University of New South Wales. He was the founding Director of the Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre in Sydney. Father Frank has written extensively on aboriginal land rights and, in 1995, he was awarded an Order of Australia for his services to Indigenous Australians. In 1998, he was named a Living National Treasure, during his involvement in the Wik Debate.

Father Frank is - by his own admission - a long-term 'fence sitter' on the question of how best to protect and promote human rights.

Mick Palmer has for 6 years, from 1988, as Commissioner of the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services. From 1994 he served for 7 years as Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police. In 1997 he became the first Australian to be appointed to the Executive Committee of Interpol, a position he held for three years. He presently holds the statutory office of Inspector of Transport Security. A lawyer, Mick is an Honours graduate of the Queensland Barristers Admission Board and in 1982 was admitted to practise as a Barrister at Law in Queensland. He practised at the private bar during 1982 and 1983 before returning to policing. In 1998, Mick was appointed Deputy Chair of the Australian National Council on Drugs. He was also appointed by the former Prime Minister to oversee an Inquiry into the Government's handling of Cornelia Rau in 2005.

Mary Kostakidis is a well-known journalist and former television news presenter from Sydney. She has a long history of community service, working with organisations such as the Drug and Alcohol Council of Australia, the Order of Australia Honours committee, and the Advertising Standards Board. Mary is on the Board of the Fred Hollows Foundation. Previously she was a member of the Breast Cancer Council Advisory Committee, the Constitutional Centenary Foundation and the Republic Advisory Committee.

Tammy Williams is from the Aboriginal community of Cherbourg in Queensland. Well before her 20's, she was a vocal spokeswoman for issues affecting young people in Australia. In 1996, she was identified as a future leader and selected to attend the State of the World Forum in San Francisco. Tammy went on to address other international forums, including the UN Commissioner of Human Rights. For her efforts, she was awarded the 1997 Youth Award by the Australian Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission. Tammy went on to get her law degree from the Queensland University of Technology in 2001 and is now a practicing Barrister-at-Law in Queensland. She's also one of the Indigenous Directors on the Board of Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships.