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MEDIA RELEASE

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ANTI-HUMAN RIGHTS BILL MUST BE DEFEATED

The Administrative Decisions (Effect of International Instruments) Bill is due to be debated in the Senate next week. Often known as the "Anti-Teoh Bill" because of its genesis in a High Court decision, this Bill takes away any obligation on an administrative decision maker to be mindful of international treaty obligations when making a decision.

If this Bill is passed by the Senate, the commitments that Australia has make by signing international human rights treaties such as the Refugee Convention and the Convention on the Rights of the Child will be meaningless. "It is like going through a wedding ceremony and then passing laws that say you do not have to pay any attention to your vows" said William Maley, RCOA Chairman.

Australia's reputation as a responsible member of the international community took a severe battering in August 2000 when the Government announced that it would no longer cooperate with UN Human Rights Treaties Committees.

"This is further evidence of the lack of understanding our current Government has for the internationally accepted fundamental principles of human rights which their predecessors played such an important role in drafting. It also shows a deeply troubling disrespect for the foundations of a healthy democratic society. It is vitally important for all Australians and for the future of this country that this Bill be blocked in the Senate" Dr Maley concluded.