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Australia's human rights failings set for exposure at UN by Australia's newest human rights NGO

Australia has the world's 4th highest number of human rights violations recorded against its name by the UN, but has taken action to remedy only 18% of these violations.

These startling figures are revealed in a report to the UN from Australia's newest human rights organisation, Remedy Australia.

Remedy Australia was launched today to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the UN Human Rights Committee's (UNHRC) decision against Tasmania's former anti-gay laws, the first human rights case to go to the UN from Australia and one of the few that resulted in a full remedy of a human rights violation.

Remedy Australia co-founder, Nick Toonen, who took the successful Tasmanian case, said,

The aim of Remedy Australia is to bring Australia's human rights record into line with what the international community and the Australian people expect of our country.

Some of the nation's leading human rights lawyers and campaigners have founded this new NGO to focus on getting Australia to act on UN concern about specific human rights violations.

Remedy Australia is a supporter-based organisation which holds our governments to account.

Olivia Ball, Remedy Australia's co-founder and author of the "Follow-up Report" which Remedy Australia today sent to the UN, said,

Over and over, the United Nations has found Australia is violating human rights in specific, concrete ways, but in 82% of cases Australia has failed to remedy abuses, many of which are gross violations of human rights – some of the most serious there are.

Under the glare of independent international scrutiny at the highest level, Australia has been found to be in violation of its international legal obligations 33 times, but it has remedied only six.

People are often surprised or disappointed to learn that the UN can't enforce its own decisions, but public pressure can protect human rights. The UN provides authoritative decisions on our human rights performance, and it's up to us to ensure they're implemented.

Ms Ball's report, which involved four years of research, can be downloaded from http://remedy.org.au/reports/2014_Follow-Up_Report_to_treaty_bodies.pdf. Backgrounders on the report and on Remedy Australia are available below.

Remedy Australia is currently campaigning on free speech, a hot topic in Australia at the moment. It is highlighting the case of a 26 year-old Townsville man who was jailed for five days simply for giving a speech in the Queensland city's pedestrian mall. The UN has found this was 'undoubtedly' a violation of freedom of expression and should be remedied, but so far no action has been taken. Details here: <http://remedy.org.au/cases/8/>.

Toonen v Australia, the UN decision against Tasmania's anti-gay laws, was publicly released twenty years ago today. It led to the enactment of a federal privacy law and the repeal of the offending Tasmanian statutes. It has also been the basis for gay law reform in other countries with the UN Human Rights Commissioner, Navi Pillay, describing it as 'a watershed with wide-ranging implications for the human rights of millions of people'.

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Further info:

- [backgrounder on Remedy Australia](#)
- [backgrounder on its “Follow-Up” Report](#)
- [the Follow-Up Report in full](#)
- [Coleman’s free speech case summarised](#)