

19th April 2010

To Whom It May Concern – Human Rights Education Conference

I write in support of the International Conference on Human Rights Education entitled '*Educating for Human Rights, Peace and Intercultural Dialogue*' being hosted by UWS in early November this year.

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory authority with responsibilities under three acts, including the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. Our own work indicates the importance of human rights education in the Australian context and we strongly support and endorse the aims and objectives of this conference.

The conference aims to support a number of UN initiatives, including the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) and the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE). In particular, it aims to evaluate and report upon the implementation of the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005 - 2009), and plans to contribute to the implementation of Second Phase of WPHRE.

The conference will also examine the contribution of human rights culture to the good functioning of civil society; highlight key trends and achievements in human rights education, in particular in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, and purports to secure greater government commitment for future human rights education. My own Commission will be a conference participant and partner.

The conference organisers have already developed a draft program, secured a conference venue and organisational support and secured a number of prominent human rights education experts, both from Australia and overseas, to address the conference. A significant international publishing house, James Nicholas Publishers, has agreed to consider the best papers for publication in a special issue of a highly regarded academic journal *Education and Society* and to publish a book."

This conference will play an important role in raising the profile and understanding of human rights in Australia.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Szoke
Commissioner