



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL  
THE HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP  
MINISTER FOR HOUSING, MINISTER FOR THE STATUS OF WOMEN  
THE HON TANYA PLIBERSEK MP**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**AUSTRALIA MOVES TO PROTECT WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

In another sign the Rudd Government is reengaging with the international community, steps have begun for Australia to accede to the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Attorney-General Robert McClelland and Minister for the Status of Women Tanya Plibersek said that by becoming a party to the Optional Protocol, the Government is clearly demonstrating its commitment to promoting and protecting women's rights.

"The previous Government refused to sign the Optional Protocol when it was adopted in 2000," Ms Plibersek said.

"By moving towards accession, Labor is making a powerful statement that discrimination against women in any form is unacceptable."

Becoming a party to the Protocol requires the Government to conduct an assessment examining the impact it will have on Australia, and in particular, Australian women.

"In conducting this assessment, we will work closely with Commonwealth agencies, State and Territory Governments, and the Australian community," Mr McClelland said.

The Attorney-General's Department, supported by the Office for the Status of Women, will commence the assessment process shortly.

Becoming party to the Optional Protocol will enable Australian women to complain to the United Nations if Australia violates its obligations under CEDAW and they have exhausted domestic remedies.

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