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# Council for the National Interest

## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COMMITTEE

### Spring Newsletter

“The young green leaves is shootin’ on the trees,  
The air is like a long cool swig o’ beer,  
The bonzer smell o’ flowers is on the breeze,  
An’ ‘ere’s me ‘ere,  
Just moochin’ round like some pore, barmy  
coot,  
Of ‘ope, an joy, an’ forchin destichoot.”

Taken from “A Spring Song” the first in “The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke” written by the immortal Australian poet, C J Dennis around 1910 in Melbourne.

Yes it is Spring and we at CNI do have something to sing about!

Prior to the October 9 federal election the Prime

Minister, John Howard, in exchange for Family First preferences, agreed that if re-elected he would introduce the concept of a Family Impact Statement (FIS) to accompany all Cabinet submissions.

The concept of FIS was developed by the members of the CNI Central Branch discussion group at least as long ago as 1997, possibly earlier. CNI has promoted the concept far and wide to federal politicians of all political persuasions, State politicians, family organisations, parents and friends associations etc., etc. Persistence has paid off. Congratulations to the members, past and present of the Central Branch discussion group! We have already written to Mr Howard to ensure that he keeps his promise and implements FIS in a process, which has appropriate family values input from bodies such as the Australian Family Association. CNI has also lobbied the State Labor Government and the Opposition on FIS and it will be interesting to see whether either has the foresight to adopt the concept.

The federal election has come and gone. The campaigns were little more than vote buying exercises. Scant attention, if any at all, was paid by any party to the future implications of the ageing

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**CONTENTS**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. ....	1
Electoral Fraud .....	2
Gap Year. ....	2
Other Initiatives .....	2
Public Forums. ....	2

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of the population, the massive foreign debt and burgeoning current account deficit nor to those “of ‘ope, an’ joy, an’ forchin destichoot” namely the growing band of working poor as well as the unemployed and other disadvantaged groups.

CNI Winter Newsletter reported that the State Government was contemplating the adoption of a recommendation from the Ministerial Advisory Council on Child Protection to incorporate UNCRC into State law. Following strong lobbying of the Government, we have now received advice from Minister Sheila McHale that “Currently the Government has no plans to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child onto State law.” This is good news but we are conscious of the word “currently”.

## **ELECTORAL FRAUD**

Unfortunately, the legislative changes for better identification requirements, mentioned in our previous newsletter, did not come into force in time for the October 9 federal election nor will they be effective for the forthcoming state election. The Central Branch discussion group has resolved to continue to pursue this issue until the desired reforms are achieved.

## **THE GAP YEAR**

The South of the River discussion group successfully completed its work in developing the concept of a “gap year” between TEE and University study. The proposal was endorsed by the WA Committee and submitted to the Federal Government. We await a response.

## **OTHER INITIATIVES**

The North of the River discussion group will have a number of issues on its next meeting agenda including Cities Decentralisation and National Infrastructure for National Development.

The Central Branch group will continue work on local government cost shifting and Commonwealth State financial arrangements as well as children’s development, health and well being and the family and US/Australia so called free trade agreement.

## **UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)**

The work of the discussion groups, very informal chats really, is vital to CNI. Concerned Australians meet to offer and discuss their views about those issues of national interest, which they see as in need of some attention at the parliamentary level. Policy discussion papers are developed for endorsement by the WA Committee, after which they become the medium for extensive lobbying efforts. The voice of CNI is therefore the voice of its members.

New participants are always welcome. If you are interested in participating or know some one who would be interested in joining so to change the future of Australia, please contact: Anne-Marie Pike tel: 9321 1925 - Denis Whitely 9271 3686.

## **PUBLIC FORUMS**

The most recent public forum was held on 10 September last in the form of a book launch “The Nightmare of the Prophet”. The author Paul Gray, columnist with the Melbourne Herald Sun, was the keynote speaker and he outlined his views, as expressed in the book, about the rise of radical Islam. Two noted commentators then gave their views. An indication of the complexity of this critical topic is that the two commentators had points of disagreement with the author and with each other. The book is worth reading as a valuable contribution to this important debate and is available through CNI for \$24.95.

Due to the recall of the Federal Parliament, prospective speakers with whom we were negotiating are not available before the end of November. Thus there will not be a further public forum in 2004.

CNI website [www.cniwa.com.au](http://www.cniwa.com.au) provides access to a great number of CNI policy papers and submissions to government or parliament as well as information about the background and objectives of CNI.

A special thank you to all our supporters. Best wishes for the coming Christmas season and looking forward to a successful and productive 2005.

Remember, as demonstrated by the FIS, persistence pays off: *“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more*

*common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan “Press On” has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.”* Author unknown.