



LETTERS:

Corporal punishment - NSW

from Alan Corbett, MLC
I am writing to seek your support for legislation to abolish corporal punishment in all schools in New South Wales. As you may be aware, I was elected this year as a Member of Parliament and my first legislative project in the next session of Parliament is a Private Member's Bill to ban this archaic, ineffective and unprofessional practice.

Most schools in New South Wales have already ceased to use corporal punishment, and only a small minority retain it. However, in a society which seeks to eliminate violence, it is wrong to condone its use in any part of the educational system. It is time for the law to reflect the reality that corporal punishment in schools is no longer acceptable.

The Bill to abolish corporal punishment in schools will be called the Education Reform Amendment (Corporal Punishment) Bill 1995, but I stress that it will have no effect on the rights of parents to administer corporal punishment to their children. This Bill will also provide

those schools who still use corporal punishment a transition period of 12 months to find more positive and appropriate means of changing behaviour.

I need your help to convince the Government that this legislation is required. If you believe that caning and other physical assaults on children are inappropriate in today's schools, please write to me as soon as possible so that I can show the Government that there is strong support for this measure.

If there is enough community support and with Government cooperation, we can outlaw this unjust before the end of next year. I would appreciate any help you could provide.
Alan Corbett

Convenor's note: DCI welcomes this initiative. Corporal punishment is a violation of the child's rights to physical integrity, dignity and freedom from inhumane punishment. It is also ineffective and promotes violence including a bullying atmosphere in schools.

Please send your views and experiences to Alan Corbett and write letters supporting Alan's Education Reform Amendment (Corporal Punishment) Bill to Premier Bob Carr and Education Minister John Aquilina at Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney 2000.

BRANCH NEWS

Canberra

The Canberra Branch continues to meet regularly on the third Monday in a member's home. We talk about a variety of topical issues and decide what we can do as a group or personally. Our current areas of action include lobbying against the Administrative Decisions Bill and writing to an ACT High School which has introduced severe (and illegal) penalties for students who do not comply with the uniform code and nuclear testing.

We are still waiting for the Education Department to seek our input to their review of safe schools strategies.

Our Saturday workshop on children's rights, held on 5 August, was attended by nine people, including some new faces. A pot-luck dinner with a raffle attracted 20 supporters and raised \$150 for DCI National Office.

Wollongong Branch

Berenice Nyland, Florence Rankin and Barbara Piscatelli have attended the China Asia Pacific Early Childhood Conference in Beijing. Excerpts of the papers they gave at the conference will be included in the next newsletter.