



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL**  
THE HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP  
**MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
THE HON STEPHEN SMITH MP  
**PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR DISABILITIES**  
THE HON BILL SHORTEN MP

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**AUSTRALIA RATIFIES UN DISABILITIES CONVENTION**

Australia has today ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, making Australia one of the first Western countries to ratify the Convention.

Australia joins 29 other countries around the world in a move that aims to promote a global community in which all people with disability are equal and active citizens.

“Ratifying the Convention clearly demonstrates the Rudd Government’s international commitment to ensuring people with disability are treated equally and not as second-class citizens,” Attorney-General Robert McClelland said.

“This significant achievement is the result of substantial collaboration by Government and Non-Government stakeholders,” Mr McClelland said.

“I applaud the co-operation of these bodies who have successfully worked together to promote this historic international instrument,” Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith said.

“Australia has a long-standing commitment to upholding and safeguarding the rights of people with disability and ratifying the Convention sends this unequivocal message to the world,” Mr Shorten said.

The ratification, which took place overnight in New York, comes after the Rudd Government expedited its ratification processes and the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties supported taking binding treaty action last month.

It also means Australia can participate in the inaugural election of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee will oversee the implementation of the Convention.

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