



Nicole Bieske, National President of Amnesty International Australia (centre) and Human Rights Act Campaign Coordinator Jenny Leong (right) hand supporter submissions to Mary Kostakidis, a member of the National Human Rights Act Consultation Committee. © AIA

HI-TECH RESPONSE

New media technology has extended the reach of your voice – as one of our supporters discovered during the public hearings for the National Human Rights Consultation.

‘Virginia’ asked a question on our website at 10.38am – about how a Human Rights Act would affect the rights of the mentally ill. By 4.30pm she was notified that she could view video of her question being asked by our activist at the public hearing and the response given by Roslyn Dundas, Director of the ACT Council of Social Services.

How did it work?

To give activists across the country a chance to experience the hearings first-hand, we set up a ‘public hearing portal’ for live blogs, videos, visual updates and links to sites like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

We asked supporters to send us questions they wanted asked through

our web portal. One of our team at the hearings used laptops and video cameras to blog and record video throughout the day. We then let people know via tweets and Facebook messages what was going on.

While question times were limited, it was possible to put some of the questions received to the panel – and record some of the answers.

Innovative interaction with existing and new supporters throughout the consultation process resulted in more than 10,000 individual submissions calling for a Human Rights Act – a quarter of all submissions made to the committee.

You were part of the biggest consultation in terms of public response ever conducted in Australia.

For more on the web portal and our campaign for a Human Rights Act for Australia visit www.amnesty.org.au/yourhumanrights.



FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC

China, 1975 ... for seven years now young people have been going to re-education camps ...

So begins the poignant story of the childhood of internationally-celebrated concert pianist Zhu Xiao-Mei, as told by artist and historian Andre Leblanc.

The Red Piano, illustrated by Stephane-Yves Barroux, highlights a period of China's history when fundamental human rights – symbolised by one girl's desire to play the piano – were continually under attack.

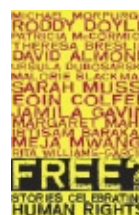
A piano, hidden away and visited only in the dead of night, sustains the young Zhu Xiao-Mei through three years of re-education through labour. It's the story of an impossible dream kept alive in the face of all odds.

And while it highlights human rights abuses of 35 years ago, *The Red Piano* itself illustrates how little things have changed. It could not be printed in China today for fear of censorship.

Targeted at a primary to secondary school audience, this little book is a must for any child's bookshelf.

REVIEW BY IAN WYNNE

The Red Piano is published by Wilkins Farago and is available through Amnesty International Australia for \$34.95. Go to www.amnesty.org.au/shop or phone 1300 787 830.



STORIES WITH A MESSAGE

The continuing significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) inspired an Australian children's writer to contribute to a recent anthology of short stories.

Ursula Dubosarsky was intrigued by the idea of writing fiction for teenagers that explored the message of human rights.

“A story is a fascinating way for young adults to consider this material – it raises the issues but leaves them to think about how they feel about it and come to their own conclusions,” she says.