

**Another key theme in this edition concerns the rights of children conceived as a result of reproductive technologies to information about their biological identity.** An important study by one young woman indicates that most of the offspring of donor conception she surveyed – in one of the largest surveys of its kind - were keen to know about their “donors”, but generally did not, as feared by some, expect any financial or emotional commitment from them. The rights of children to know their identity, a right under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, has been arising in different jurisdictions all around the world as the long-term implications become clearer – and as these children reach an age where their demands can be heard. One of the main concerns has been that lack of continued anonymity of donors would discourage sperm donors but the experience in some other countries has not borne this out. Moreover, the view has quite rightly been put that children’s rights should over-ride this concern. Further, it should not depend on where children are born as to whether they have such rights. Currently only Victoria clearly provides such rights.

**Point of information is the work that the National Children’s and Youth Law Centre and DCI Australia are doing to co-ordinate the preparation of the next NGO report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.** A consultation paper is currently being developed and will be distributed widely to non-government organisations and others. It will be available on both web-sites and we are currently looking at an interactive site to make it accessible and engaging for children and young people. We will also be seeking help from members across Australia to distribute and respond to the consultation paper. If you wish to offer your views beforehand or contribute in any other way, please let us know by contacting us via email or by the office telephone and fax.

**Meanwhile** we will also be holding our overdue AGM and some information and flyers about this should be included with this newsletter. If you have not yet paid for your subscription, please do so asap to assist our finances and to ensure you receive future copies of ACRN.

**Best wishes**  
**Judy Cashmore, National President**

## Award for DCI

Defence for Children International (DCI) was awarded the prestigious Dutch human rights prize.

Immediate Past President and Director of DCI-Israel, Dr. Philip Veerman, and President Jorge Vila Despujol from Bolivia, represented DCI at the ceremony on March 13<sup>th</sup> 2003 in the Big Church of Vlaardingen, a town known for its resistance during the Second World War.

Dr. Veerman: “I consider the prize a recognition for the children’s rights movement in general, of which we are the avant garde. The prize is a reminder that children’s rights must be put on the top of all states’ political agenda”.

The Prize is given by a Dutch Foundation, the Geuzenverzet 1940-1945 Foundation, founded in 1987 and dedicated to the memory of the resistance group De Geuzen (The Beggars) which was active during World War II in the Dutch Delta. The organization annually honours people or institutions that are dedicated to the maintenance of human values in modern society.

The award, which was given in the past to Amnesty International, is annually awarded to an association or a person for pioneering human rights work. DCI receives the prize for its central role in protecting the children’s human rights all over the world.

Being the leading Children’s Rights organization, DCI played an active role in the drafting process of the UN Convention on The Rights of The Child (1979-1989), and became the main international source of lobbying for the ratification and implementation of the convention by as many states possible. Their lobby contributed to the speedy ratification of the Convention by all states in the world except for the USA and Somalia.

Veerman: “I consider this prestigious Dutch human rights prize as a recognition for the children’s rights movement in general, of which we are the avant garde, the pioneers. When we started our work in 1979, many organizations for children and even UNICEF did not want to touch children’s rights, because they thought it was ‘political’. Now almost all the major organizations have adopted at least the rhetoric of children’s rights. Yet, in the field...many children are abused, neglected, tortured, enlisted as soldiers or sent to prostitution on a daily basis. The prize is a reminder that children’s rights must be put on the top of all states’ political agenda”.