

Start the charge from home

Philip Lynch

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Two of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's election promises - to increase Australia's involvement with the United Nations human rights system and provide greater legislative protection of human rights - have been addressed in Tuesday's Federal Budget. The budget included the putting aside of \$2.8 million over two years to provide national consultation on legislation for human rights and funds to help with the negotiation and implementation of human rights treaties. Earlier this month, Australia proposed to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Human Rights Law Resource Centre is preparing a major report for the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Nobel prize winning economist Amartya Sen believes that investment in human rights results in major returns in social cohesion and economic participation. (Philip Lynch is director of the Human Rights Law Resource Centre).

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