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## **Australia: Picking and choosing human rights standards**

*Australian senators must take responsibility for the protection of human rights by rejecting the Administrative Decisions Bill (1997), known as the "Teoh bill", due before the Upper House this week, Amnesty International said.*

*Adoption of the controversial law would mean that Australians could not use international human rights standards -- which Australia has signed up to -- when complaining about violations of rights in Australian courts.*

*By ratifying any international treaty, the Australian government is obliged to give it full effect in domestic law and practice.*

*"However it now seems the government wants to pick and choose which rights Australians can enjoy."*

*Last year the United Nations Human Rights Committee urged the government to withdraw the proposed Bill because it would violate civil and political rights, for example Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which is the obligation to make rights real in law and practice.*

*"Contrary to its positive history in the international human rights field, the Australian government ignored four UN reports on its human rights record last year. Adoption of this Bill would be a further sign of the Australian government's indifference to its obligations."*

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