

**First Regional Workshop
Darwin, Australia 8 – 10 July 1996**

The first meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions was held in Darwin, Australia, from 8 to 10 July 1996.

The workshop was jointly organised by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and the New Zealand Human Rights Commission and was sponsored by the UN Office of the High Commissioner and the Australian Government through its development agency, AusAID.

The national human rights commissions of Australia, India, Indonesia and New Zealand, attended the workshop. The Philippines Commission on Human Rights which had accepted the invitation to participate was unable to attend.

The workshop was also attended by representatives, as observers, of three governments with already-established human rights commissions (Australia, New Zealand and India) and eight governments working towards the establishment of commissions (Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Mongolia, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Fiji). A number of non-government organisations also participated in the workshop as observers, including representatives of Amnesty International, Law Asia, the Coordinating Committee of Human Rights Organisations in Thailand, the Australian Aboriginal community and a number of academic institutions.

The workshop was addressed by the Special Adviser on National Human Rights Institutions to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The workshop discussed matters of common interest to commissions, including their independence, their functions and powers, their investigation and conciliation processes, community education and media relations. The workshop also heard from government representatives about plans and progress towards the establishment of national human rights institutions in their respective countries.

The workshop produced a final statement, the Larrakia Declaration and agreed to the establishment of the **Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**.