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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE DRAFT CONVENTION
ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Suggestions and Observations of Governments on the draft Convention

XVII. Australia

The following suggestions and observations, dated 7 August 1951, were received from the Government of Australia:

"The Australian Government wishes to reiterate its support for the objectives which it is hoped to realise by the adoption of a Convention on freedom of information, namely, the promotion of all possible means designed to secure the free flow of news and information subject only to just and reasonable restrictions required in the public interest.

However, the Australian Government is concerned lest the enumeration of restrictions which may justly be imposed on the flow of information may be utilised to sanction unnecessary and objectionable limitations of this freedom. The suggested amendments to Article 2, contained in Resolution A of the committee which drafted the report, are therefore viewed with apprehension as they reveal a tendency which, in the opinion of the Australian Government, may result in a restriction rather than an expansion of the objectives for which the Convention stands.

The Australian Government is also concerned by the possible confusion arising out of Article 10, and, in view of the importance of the relations between the proposed Convention and the Covenant of Human Rights, considers that further action on the Convention should be deferred until the Human Rights Commission has completed its work on the Covenant.

In view of these considerations, and believing that the text of the Convention does not at present command sufficient support to secure ratification, the Australian Government is opposed to calling a special conference on this subject at the present time."