

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES, AUSTRALIA

INTERVENTION #2 of 2104

I thank the Chair for the opportunity.

So, what is the way forward?

Member States who already believe that a Convention is needed must continue their persuasive advocacy among their peers in this place. They must also think about what can be done in the near future to enhance the UNs role in making the lives of older people better, fairer, respected and dignified.

Member States sitting on the fence need to look carefully at the debates here this week and do some soul searching. We think you know what is right and just.

Member States who are opposed please open your minds to this continuing process. Be open to the cost benefit analysis. Talk to older people in your own backyards and listen to what they say about their lives. Make a judgment only after you have heard what those who would be affected have to say. Of course the sovereign rights of nations lie with Governments, however the heart of your countries are the people. The older the heart, the more it has loved, hurt, and learned.

All of our words here may be powerful, whichever side they advocate. None can be as powerful as the words of a Convention. They are the words that have true power for older people. Even if they know nothing of the debates happening here, or even, ultimately, the words of a Convention. The true power is in the text of a Convention.

Let us make sure that when we leave we carry with us the momentum to meet again and continue to explore these issues.

BILL MITCHELL