



Press Release

28 December 2016

### Andrew Bolt's article about AJCN

Articles in the Sun Herald (December 15, 2016/ Title: Now Japanese use our race law against a war memorial) and The Australian newspapers (December 19,2016 / Title: 'Comfort Women' row shows absurdity of 18C) which attack the section 18C complaint brought by AJCN, miss the point. This has nothing to do with the great monuments to peace and remembrance of Australia's war dead, which Australian war memorials are. It has nothing to do with debates between Koreans and Japanese about their wartime history.

Japanese Australians are feeling intimidated and humiliated by the display of the comfort women statue, as it singles Japanese out as perpetrators of shameful conduct towards women in wartime, of all the peoples who call Australia home. This has been done deliberately. We know this from the wording of the plaque accompanying the statue and the public statements made by Rev Crews before the media spotlight has fallen on the case. He said he did it to make "the perpetrators" - being the Japanese – apologise in a video posted over the internet in April. He also said he did it out of a sense of outrage about the decision of Strathfield Council not to permit the exhibition of the statue at the public place, on similar grounds to our present complaint. The statue was never exhibited in a good faith.

Naturally Japanese in Australia are offended and insulted by being singled out, alone amongst the people of the world, as perpetrators of sexual violence towards women during wartime.

We have been expressing our concerns to the Uniting Church since June. Rev Crews now says the statue is to help us all contemplate the lamentable scourge of sexual violence towards women in all wars, and even those women suffering domestic violence in today's society. So we have said to Rev Crews of the Uniting Church - make the message universal on the accompanying plaque, to match your own words as to what you say it commemorates. In its present form, it is causing fear in Japanese people based on their race.



We think the Uniting Church did not realise how comfort women statues abroad have been used as focal points for the racial abuse of Japanese people today, or to educate young people to hate Japanese people although we explained with many examples of those cases really happening. We are very aware of that and we are doing everything we can to stop such practices being imported here. This past experience naturally makes us wary about the true motivations of those who imported the statue to Australia, and vigilant to protect ourselves from similar abuse here.

We have great hopes for the conciliation process at the HRC that the leadership of the Uniting Church will work with us to find a compromise. Let us all remember the female victims of war; there is no need to treat us Japanese living in Australia differently as we do so.

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President

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