



PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

**5TH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION CONFERENCE
'ADVANCING UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE'**

I am pleased to provide this message for the 5th International Human Rights Education Conference.

This conference brings together students and academics to consider challenges to human rights and how to overcome them.

The theme, *Advancing UNiversal Human Rights Culture*, is a reminder that it is our shared responsibility to ensure all people can exercise the freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

At this time, the world is responding to the threat of extremism in the Middle East. Australia and the United States, as part of an international coalition, are working to disrupt and degrade ISIL.

The ISIL death cult is not only a threat to human rights, but a threat to our humanity.

Human rights are founded on the principle that we should act towards others as we would have them act towards us.

As one of the world's oldest continual democracies, Australia is determined to ensure our country remains a free, fair and just society. As a nation, we have built a robust democracy that serves to protect the rights and freedoms of every Australian.

Education is the first defence to protect human rights.

I pay tribute the University of Western Sydney for the significant contribution it makes to human rights education. This conference would not be possible without the support of institutions like UWS and the American University.

On behalf of the Australian Government, I send my best wishes to all delegates for a productive International Human Rights Education Conference.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tony Abbott'.

The Hon Tony Abbott MP
Prime Minister of Australia

23 October 2014