

CONFRONTING A SCANDAL

A Symposium on *TORTURE*

Foreword by Malcolm Fraser

The Symposium Papers

An Agreed Statement on Torture

Edited by John Howells for the

Mornington Peninsula Human Rights Group

The Mornington Peninsula Human Rights Group held a Symposium on Torture on 5 May 2007 for forty people. After hearing short papers by five local citizens and a keynote address by ethicist and author Alan Nichols, those present developed an agreed statement condemning torture.

Five Propositions concerning Torture

Torture violates the inherent dignity of the human person

Torture is rightly banned in international law

Torture is unnecessary

Torture is counterproductive

Torture undermines a nation's moral authority



Torture is torture. It permanently scars the victim even when there are no visible marks on the body, and it leaves other scars on the lives of those who perform it and on the life of the nation that allowed and encouraged it. Those scars will be with us for a long time.

Colin Thornby

Torture fails all ethical tests. Even in a Just War, torture is never necessary or justified. All the subterfuges are designed to lull us into a false sense of 'trust us, we live in difficult times'. Must we keep silence for ever because of the Twin Towers? Is it the end of human rights absolutes? Will we surrender all sense of decency and law, without a whimper?

Alan Nichols

Why is torture so popular? ... The powerful turn to torture in times of crisis, not because it works but because it salves their fears and insecurities with the psychic balm of empowerment.

Alfred W. McCoy

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A SYMPOSIUM ON TORTURE

**Edited by John Howells for the
Mornington Peninsula Human Rights Group**

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