



## **FEDERAL MAGISTRATES COURT OF AUSTRALIA**

### **Trafficking in unborn children in the Asia-Pacific region**

**22 May 2009**

The Chief Federal Magistrate of the Federal Magistrates Court of Australia, Mr John Pascoe, will deliver a speech this Saturday which raises concerns about trafficking in unborn children.

This speech follows Mr Pascoe's previous presentation last August which highlighted the vulnerability of the unborn and newly born child to trafficking across international borders.

Mr Pascoe will deliver his paper at the LAWASIA Conference on 'Children and the Law' which runs from 21-23 May 2009 in Singapore.

Mr Pascoe will be speaking on these issues in the context of the Asia-Pacific Region where he believes it is of growing importance. In particular he will discuss the issue of illegal inter-country adoption which is considered to be a primary reason for trafficking of the unborn in the region.

"Figures on inter-country adoption indicate that formal and legal adoptions from Asia to abroad are occurring on a significant scale.

We need to be concerned about trafficking in the unborn because it is a logical extension of the already existing cases on child selling and illegal inter-country adoption in the region."

Acknowledging that child trafficking, including child selling, is driven by economics, Mr Pascoe says that trafficking networks have realised the need to ensure the highest market value for these babies. In order to do so, they have identified pregnant women as the means by which babies can best be moved. The movement of unborn babies in utero ensures the child will be in the best possible care whilst in transit and without detection by local authorities.

Although he commends the work against human trafficking currently being conducting in the Asia-Pacific region, Mr Pascoe will highlight the inadequacies of international law to deal with these issues in the region and will look at whether the unborn child can be afforded legal protection so as to provide a "voice to those who cannot speak for themselves and must rely on our humanity and commitment to human dignity and the rights of all."

#### **Media enquiries:**

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**For a copy of the speech, please email: [media@fmc.gov.au](mailto:media@fmc.gov.au)**

**For more details on the conference, visit:**

**<http://lawasia.asn.au/lawasia-conferences.htm>**