

From: Jan Willem van de Meene
Sent: Wednesday, 2 September 2015 10:55 AM
To: Committee, JSCFADT (REPS)
Subject: Comments for the Sub-Committee

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to make a submission about Australia's advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty.

I strongly support the Sub-Committee's work in this area. I am one with a growing number of Australians who do not accept the need for the death penalty.

I feel that the Australian government can do much more on the international stage. Our government, together with like-minded governments in other countries, can do much to assist countries which still have the death penalty to appreciate that there are more humane and fairer forms of punishment. As a neighbour and trading partner of many such countries we are in a special position to express our views. It is not interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries but rather standing up for the rights of citizens of the world. In Australia I believe we have been developing a different, and better, understanding of the "dignity and worth of the human person". With increased communication we know so much more about the unacceptable treatment of many facing punishment.

If Australia is to engage more closely with countries to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty, we should be consistent in our message and understanding. Surely Australia can stand up for all the thousands of people on death row and those killed without due process. I refer you to an on-line article in The Age on 4 May 2015 "Bali nine executions highlight Australia's hypocrisy on the death penalty" written by Jennifer Robinson, a human rights lawyer. For example, "But we aren't against Indonesians killing West Papuans without any due process." Our Foreign Minister and our diplomats can do much more to present a consistent message which highlights our genuine concern for others.

Yours sincerely,
John van de Meene