



**Submission No 25**

**Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Dialogues with China  
and Vietnam**

Answers to Questions taken on Notice

**Organisation:** ATTORNEY-GENERALS DEPARTMENT

PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Dialogues with China and Vietnam

ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT—RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
FROM PUBLIC HEARING, THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2011

1. **Dr Boersig:** The actual issue itself in terms of the presentation in China would be obviously led by DFAT on the advice of the Attorney ultimately raising a particular issue. But I would have to take on notice to know what the position is specifically about that. (p. 3)

*The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:*

Australia has used the Australia-China Human Rights Dialogues as a forum to raise with China issues relating to the death penalty and the high level of executions in China.

2. **Ms PARKE:** I know there have been some pronouncements from the Chinese government that they are endeavouring to reduce that and to put in place a organ donor program. But I understand that this has not been very successful to date, so I am assuming that the vast majority of organs transplanted are still coming from executed prisoners. Do you have anything to say about that?

**Dr Boersig:** I would have to take that on notice. I am not aware personally of what the position the department takes on that. (p. 3)

*The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:*

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade advises that China's first organ donation scheme, run jointly by the Red Cross and Chinese Ministry of Health, was launched in March 2010. Although the program is a positive step, it remains unclear what effect it will have to reduce illegal organ harvesting in China, including from executed prisoners.

3. **Ms PARKE:** You are not aware that that issue has ever been raised in the human rights dialogues with China?

**Dr Boersig:** No, I am not aware of that particular issue having being raised. I would have to check the briefings for that. (pp. 3-4)

*The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:*

Australia has raised with China the issues of organ donation programs and the harvesting of organs from prisoners through the human rights dialogues, including at the 2010 Australia-China Human Rights Dialogue on 20 December 2010.

4. **CHAIR:** A criticism of Australia that I do not think would be seen as political would be incarceration rates in this country and the growth in them. Have they ever raised that and, if so, what was our response on that?

**Dr Boersig:** I would have to check the brief on that. It was some time ago. (p. 4)

*The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:*

This issue was not raised with Australia at the Australia-China human rights dialogue held in December 2010. This issue was not raised with Australia at the Australia-Vietnam human rights dialogue held in February 2011.