



SENATOR THE HON BOB CARR

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CANBERRA

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Murphy

26 JUN 2012

Thank you for your letter of 28 May 2012 (ref: 671/1079) regarding the Standing Committee on Petitions' consideration of a petition to increase foreign aid funding for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

While the world has already met the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of halving the number of people without access to safe drinking water, the Australian Government recognises that this work is far from finished. Many people are still without access to safe drinking water and 2.5 billion people still lack access to improved sanitation.

The Government has responded to the need for greater investment in support of the MDG sanitation target. A key objective of Australia's aid program is to improve public health by increasing access to WASH. In support of this objective, Australian Government funding for WASH is expected to be \$1 billion over the next four years.

This commitment recognises that investing in WASH is a proven way to reduce the disease burden on the poor, particularly for children. This investment is expected to provide access to safe water to 5.8 million people and access to basic sanitation to 4.6 million people across Asia, Africa and the Pacific.

The Government is currently spending about thirty per cent of WASH aid expenditure on sanitation activities which represents a doubling in the proportion of spending on sanitation activities over the last three years.

Thank you for bringing this petition to the attention of the Australian Government.

Yours sincerely

Bob Carr

