



## **MEDIA ALERT**

Issued: 11 March 2010

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS**

*Chair: Mrs Julia Irwin MP  
Deputy Chair: Mr Russell Broadbent MP*

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# **Breaker Morant petition to be scrutinised by House Petitions Committee**

A petition calling for a British Crown Pardon for Harry 'Breaker' Morant will be the subject of a public hearing by the House of Representatives Petitions Committee at Parliament House next Monday.

Breaker Morant was convicted in 1902 along with two others, Peter Handcock and George Witton for executing Boer prisoners of war. The three men were tried by British Military Courts Martial, and Morant and Handcock were subsequently executed by firing squad in Pretoria.

The petition being considered by the Petitions committee is calling for a British Crown Pardon and questions the fairness of the legal process and sentencing.

Committee Chair, Julia Irwin MP says the convictions of Morant, Handcock and Witton have long been the subject of debate in Australia, and the Committee will examine the petition in depth at next Monday's public hearing.

"The Committee will publicly examine the issues raised in the petition and the different points of view that have been taken," Mrs Irwin says.

"We'll be considering what happened then and what possible action can—or should—be taken, 108 years after the event. This is an issue that still evokes strong feelings."

In keeping with the practice of referring petitions to the relevant Minister for a response, the Breaker Morant petition has been referred to the Australian Attorney-General, and representatives of that department will appear before the committee at Monday's hearing.

**Date:** Monday 15 March 2010

**Time:** 9.30 am – 12.00 pm

**Venue:** Committee Room 2S1 Parliament House

Program details for the hearing will be posted on the Committee's webpage on Friday 12 March.

**For media comment** please contact the Committee Chair, Julia Irwin, on (02) 6277 4300 (Parliament House); or (02) 8786 1004 (Electorate Office).

**For background information** please contact the Committee secretariat:

Phone: (02) 6277 2152;

Email: [petitions.committee.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:petitions.committee.reps@aph.gov.au); or

Website: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/petitions/index.htm>

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