



Treaties Committee supports ratification of Sentenced Persons Transfer Agreement with Hong Kong

Dr Andrew Southcott MP, Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties today (Monday 27 February) tabled *Report 71*, which includes a recommendation that Australia ratify a treaty with Hong Kong concerning the transfer of sentenced persons.

The Agreement will allow for the repatriation of Australian or Hong Kong prisoners who are serving out their sentences in reciprocal countries and have community ties with their country of origin.

Under the Agreement, sentences of transferred prisoners would not change except where the law of the receiving Party is incompatible with the law of the transferring Party. Transferring Parties would retain jurisdiction for the revision, modification, or cancellation of convictions or sentences imposed.

Eighteen Australians are currently housed in Hong Kong gaols or awaiting sentencing that have the potential to apply for transfer under the Agreement.

“This Agreement will help to improve the potential for prisoner rehabilitation by removing language and cultural barriers which may be experienced by Australians in Hong Kong gaols”

“Further the Agreement will relieve the financial and social burdens imposed on prisoners’ relatives and also reduce the burden on Australian consular officials in Hong Kong,” Dr Southcott said.

Report 71 is available on the Committee’s website:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/report.htm>

or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

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