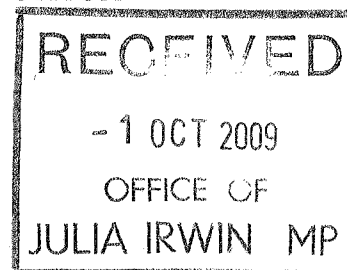


**The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP  
Minister for Housing  
Minister for the Status of Women**

MC09-020128

Mrs Julia Irwin MP  
Chair - Standing Committee on Petitions  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mrs Irwin

*Julia*

Thank you for your letter of 20 August 2009 forwarding a petition submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions regarding justice for "comfort women".

The Australian Government places great importance on the promotion of universal human rights, including, of course, the rights of women. Australia was one of the original signatories to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1980 and ratified the Convention in 1983. Australia formally acceded to the Optional Protocol to CEDAW on 4 December 2008.

This matter falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Stephen Smith MP. I have taken the opportunity to forward a copy of your letter to Minister Smith for his consideration and reply.

Once again, thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely

**Tanya Plibersek**

*21.9.09*