



ATTORNEY-GENERAL

CANBERRA

MS17-00063

Mr Ross Vasta MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Chair 

Thank you for your letter to me of 12 October 2016 regarding a petition calling for ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).

As foreshadowed in the correspondence from my Chief of Staff, Mr James Lambie, on 22 November 2016, I write to respond to that petition, and apologise for the delay in doing so.

On 9 February 2017, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, and I announced the Turnbull Government's intention to ratify OPCAT by December 2017.

The ratification of OPCAT will be another significant human rights achievement for the Turnbull Government. It will improve the oversight of places of detention under Australia's jurisdiction and control, and reflects the Government's commitment to preventing torture and mistreatment.

The Government respects the role each state and territory plays in managing detention facilities, and will work with them to ratify the OPCAT by December 2017.

The transcript of my speech from 9 February 2017, in which I announce the Government's intention to ratify OPCAT, is available at www.attorneygeneral.gov.au/Pages/Newsroom.aspx

Thank you again for writing on this matter.

Yours faithfully

(George Brandis)