



1101-1598

**THE HON JULIE BISHOP MP**

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ref. 1101/1598

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021 Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear *Dennis* Dr Jensen

Thank you for your letter of 9 November 2015, regarding a petition submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions about the September 2015 report of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL).

Australia has noted the serious findings of the OISL, particularly that war crimes and crimes against humanity may have been committed by both sides to the civil conflict.

In that context, Australia welcomes Sri Lanka's proposals for independent, credible and empowered mechanisms for truth seeking, justice, reparations and non-recurrence. Sri Lanka has committed to accepting international assistance for its proposed approach, including Commonwealth and other foreign judges, lawyers, prosecutors and investigators.

If effectively implemented, Sri Lanka's proposals will provide it with a platform to help achieve genuine reconciliation.

Australia was pleased to have co-sponsored the UN Human Rights Council resolution supporting reconciliation in Sri Lanka, adopted on 1 October 2015, and stands ready to assist as Sri Lanka implements these mechanisms.

Australia has maintained a robust dialogue with Sri Lanka on issues of human rights, reconciliation and accountability. We continue to provide practical assistance to promote reconciliation, including capacity-building assistance to the Northern Provincial Council.

Australia's strong cooperation with Sri Lanka to prevent people smuggling helps to save lives that might otherwise be lost at sea. In working with Sri Lanka on this important issue, the Australian Government always acts in accordance with Australia's international obligations.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely *v best wishes*

J Julie Bishop

21 DEC 2015