



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Human Rights Sub-Committee**

MEDIA RELEASE
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*Chair: The Hon Philip Ruddock MP
Deputy: Senator Anne McEwen*

Hearings for inquiry into the abolition of the death penalty to begin

Australia has a longstanding, bipartisan policy commitment to the abolition of the death penalty. Earlier this year the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, issued terms of reference to the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade for an inquiry into how Australia can play a greater role toward global abolition of the death penalty.

Following scores of submissions to the inquiry, the Sub-Committee will hold a series of public hearings to augment the range of evidence received and meetings held to date.

Sub-Committee Chair, the Hon Philip Ruddock MP, says that over coming days the Sub-Committee will hold discussions with leading abolition advocates from Australia and around the world, which will help inform recommendations for Australia's future advocacy strategy.

"Australia, as an abolitionist country, has an obligation to work towards the global abolition of the death penalty.

"I'm pleased to see a range of submissions have been made to this inquiry as to how Australia can assist other nations to move toward ending this practice.

"The Sub-Committee is looking forward to discussing these submissions with their authors and other experts in the field over coming days", Mr. Ruddock said.

While the Sub-Committee is concerned for the welfare of individuals facing the death penalty, this inquiry is a chance to explore options for strengthening Australia's anti-death penalty engagement and advocacy, rather than examining specific cases.

The Sub-Committee will hold three public hearings:

- Tuesday 17 November – Melbourne
- Friday 20 November – Sydney
- Friday 27 November – Canberra

Programs will be made available prior to the hearings on the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/deathpenalty. The hearing will be audio webcast live on: www.aph.gov.au/live.

For media comment: Contact the Sub-Committee Chair, the Hon Philip Ruddock MP via Mr Ross Macdonald on 0417 852 209. For all other inquiries, contact the Inquiry Secretary on (02) 6277 4306.