



18 October 2024

Dear federal representatives

### **Action to protect human rights in Myanmar**

On behalf of Australian Quakers I write to raise deep concern about the tragic situation in Myanmar since the military coup in February 2021. The people of Myanmar are suffering greatly due to violence from the military junta, the extreme suppression of democratic voices, and ongoing discrimination against minorities, especially Rohingya people. The legitimate government – the National Unity Government – has been subject to imprisonment and torture.

We are grateful that this week Australia committed an additional \$9 million in humanitarian aid. However, as we all know, it is a political solution that is required.

We were also grateful that the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister stood with Sean Turnell this week as he shared his story of 650 days imprisoned by the junta. We share sentiments expressed by the Foreign Minister “We are all appalled by the reports of widespread human rights abuses and atrocities” and “We must remain resolute in our support for the people of Myanmar.

Australia has had long diplomatic and people-to-people links with Myanmar, and has been the source of regular development assistance to that country.

We are pleased that the Australian Government has made clear its concerns at the deteriorating political, economic and development situation, and continues to call on the military to end violence against civilians, engage in dialogue, release those unjustly detained, allow safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance, and return Myanmar to the path of democracy.

We urge you to use your influence and advocacy to:

- (a) seek the immediate release of political prisoners including President Win Myint and State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi;
- (b) ask our government to recognise and work with the legitimate government – the National Unity Government - and its official representative in Canberra, Dr Tun Aung Shwe;
- (c) echo the renewed calls for an arms embargo and further sanctions on Myanmar by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar;
- (d) support the effective distribution of humanitarian assistance to people living in conflict areas; and
- (e) call for an end to all forms of violence in Myanmar.

In peace

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Henry", with a horizontal line underneath.

Bruce Henry  
Presiding Clerk  
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia