2 March 2015

Julie Bishop MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I write on behalf of Australian Quakers to you in your role as Foreign Minister in relation to the two Australians awaiting the death penalty in Indonesia. I am writing a similar letter to the Shadow Foreign Minister.

Firstly I congratulate you on the moving and strong statements you made in Parliament over the death penalty for the two Australians Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaram. It was fitting that the Parliament was united in its expression of concern.

As Quakers we are firmly against capital punishment for any offence. We believe it would be timely for the Government and Opposition to work together for the abolition of the death penalty in all countries. We urge you to begin such a campaign through all available diplomatic channels, building upon Australia's enhanced global standing as a result of its active role on the United Nations Security Council over the past two years.

The campaign could include encouraging those states where the death penalty is still actively applied, to start by declaring an indefinite moratorium on its use, and then moving to replace capital punishment with alternative options for all crimes as soon as possible.

We believe that most Australians are opposed to the death penalty, or are at least open to persuasion that it is no longer appropriate and does not deter serious crime, and runs the risk of executing innocent people.

We expect that a cross-party campaign led by the Government and Opposition would be supported by the media, the legal community, by many NGOs and the general community.

In peace

Julian Robertson

Julian Robertson
Presiding Clerk
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