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The Hon Kevin Rudd MP  
Prime Minister  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

8 April 2008

Dear Prime Minister

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (ALHR) congratulates you on your appointment as Prime Minister.

ALHR is extremely supportive of the recent decision to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture which we confirmed in a media release, and in an [interview](#) on ABC NewsRadio.

We strongly commend your recent announcement that the Commonwealth Government will report at the beginning of each Parliamentary Year on the progress it has made in closing the gap on life expectancy for indigenous Australians. The apology was beautifully executed.

We congratulate your government on its election commitment to initiating a consultation process about how best to promote and protect the rights of Australians. ALHR's membership of 1300 legal professionals looks forward to contributing to the consultation when announced.

ALHR signalled with a media release its great relief at the closure of the detention facilities on Nauru.

Finally, we ask whether the Government has considered opportunities to resource a nation-wide celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 2008.

I look forward to meeting you at the 2020 Summit, where I will be participating in the governance stream. ALHR will be making a submission and will also be represented by ex-President Simon Rice, National Committee member Ben Saul, ex-Treasurer Robin Banks and ACT member George Williams.

**Who we are**

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights Inc (ALHR) was established in 1993, and incorporated as an association in NSW in 1998 (ABN 76 329 114 323).

ALHR is a network of Australian lawyers active in practising and promoting awareness of international human rights standards in Australia. ALHR has a national membership of over 1,300 people, with active National, State and Territory committees.

Through training, information, submissions and networking, ALHR promotes the practice of human rights law in Australia. ALHR has extensive experience and expertise in the principles and practice of international law, and human rights law in Australia.

ALHR is a member of the Australian Forum of Human Rights Organisations. It is a member of the Commonwealth Attorney General's NGO Forum on Human Rights, and the Department for Foreign Affairs Human Rights NGO Consultations.

Issues addressed by ALHR include anti-terrorism laws, refugee and migration issues, proposed reforms of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, amendments to anti-discrimination laws, and Australia's National Human Rights Action Plan.

To help lawyers use human rights remedies in their daily legal work, ALHR runs seminars on the use of international human rights standards in daily legal practice, in areas such as family law, tenancy, anti-discrimination, crime, corporations, land and environment, and employment. We have recently commissioned a training package on human rights law that we hope to roll out to articled clerks and APS graduate intakes.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these recommendations and concerns with you and your advisers and to elaborate further on the detail.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Harris Rimmer  
President  
Australian Lawyers for Human Rights

## SUMMARY OF ALHR ACTION BY DATE ORDER

### MEDIA RELEASES

<b>1 March 2008</b>	<b>Australian Government announces will sign Optional Protocol to Convention Against Torture</b>	
	Press release	Civil and Political Rights
	Australian Lawyers for Human Rights today welcomed the Federal Government's announcement to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture.	
	A copy of ALHR's press release is available for download.	

<b>13 February 2008</b>	<b>Apology - ALHR welcomes a new beginning for reconciliation</b>	
	Press release	Indigenous Rights
	Australian Lawyers for Human Rights welcomed the apology to the stolen generations, given by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in Parliament House today. "ALHR appreciated that the apology was the first item of business for the first sitting of the 42nd Parliament" said Susan Harris Rimmer, Acting President.	
	A copy of ALHR's press release is available for download.	