



AUSTRALIAN
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HUMAN RIGHTS

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Media release: **THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER 2015**

Phillip Ruddock Forwards the Fight Against the Death Penalty From Brisbane

This Saturday marks thirteen years since the first World Day Against the Death Penalty was established to combat the primitive practice of capital punishment. The 13th World Day Against the Death Penalty is raising awareness around the application of the death penalty for drug-related offences. Australian Lawyers For Human Rights (ALHR) is proud to be co-hosting a formal dinner this Friday night at the Broncos Leagues Club with Australians Against Capital Punishment (AACP) and Reprieve Australia and welcoming keynote speaker, the Hon Phillip Ruddock MP, co-chair of the Australian Parliamentarians against the Death Penalty group.

Mr Ruddock will be joined by fellow esteemed human rights advocates, Julian McMahon (barrister and part of Andrew Chan's and Myuran Sukumaran's legal team) and Stephen Keim SC (Australian Human Rights Medalist, former President of ALHR and now Patron of AACP) each of whom will provide engaging and insightful presentations regarding targeted and effective global advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty.

ALHR Qld Convenor, Benedict Coyne, stated: "This very important day marks the great distinction between humanity's ability for civility and the barbarity of state sanctioned murder. It is a time for Australians to reflect and to remember Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran and other Australians and fellow human beings who have been executed or who remain on death row throughout the world. It is also a time to remember that all human beings deserve a fair-go, forgiveness and an opportunity for redemption and that an eye for an eye indeed makes the whole world blind."

ALHR recently lodged a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade regarding Australia's international advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty. Mr Coyne continued: "ALHR strongly opposes the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle. We consider that its use clearly violates fundamental international human rights norms such as the right to life and the right not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. Both of these rights are recognised in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and other international and regional human rights instruments."

"The death penalty undermines human dignity, which is inherent to every human being. Furthermore, it has no value as a deterrent, and any miscarriage of justice in capital cases is irreversible and irreparable. ALHR recognises that every country has the right to approach domestic criminal justice issues in a sovereign manner, and a responsibility to protect the public from crime. However, the death penalty is not an effective way to do so and the taking of life is far too absolute and irreversible a measure for the State to impose, even when backed by legal process," stated Mr Coyne.

"It is very encouraging to see the abolition of the death penalty as a non-partisan issue in Australia and innovations like the Australian Parliamentarians against the Death Penalty group leading to focused international advocacy. Globally the cause of abolition is making slow but steady progress. Australian people are strongly passionate about promoting this historic humanitarian cause as was evidenced by the outpouring of support for Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran."

There are still limited tickets available for this important human rights event but they are selling fast:
https://www.stickytickets.com.au/28543/world_day_against_the_death_penalty_dinner.aspx

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ALHR (Australian Lawyers for Human Rights) 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 2,600 people, with active National, State and Territory committees.