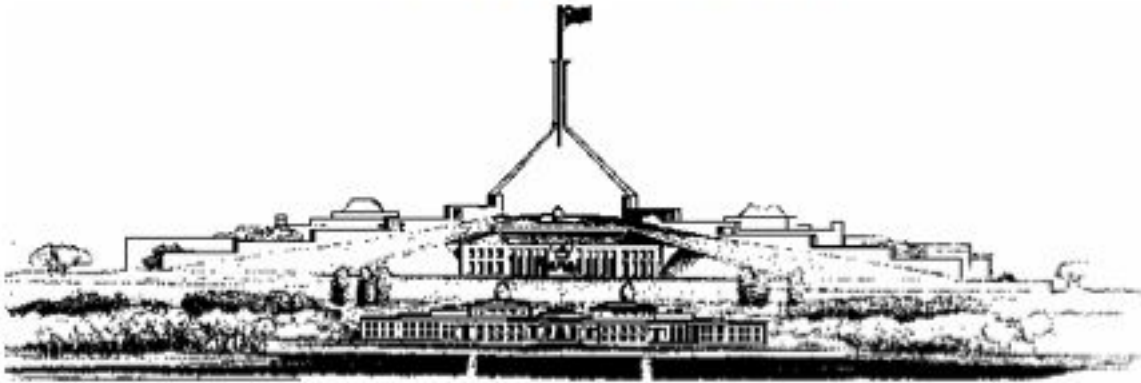




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PETITIONS

Assange, Mr Julian

PROCEDURAL TEXT

Monday, 19 June 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROCEDURAL TEXT

Date Monday, 19 June 2017
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Questioner
Speaker

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Assange, Mr Julian

Assange, Mr Julian

Dear Mr Vasta

Thank you for your letter of 20 March 2017 regarding the petition (PN0054) submitted by the Concerned Citizens of Australia to the Standing Committee on Petitions.

The petition refers to Opinion No.54/2015 of the UN Working Group on

Arbitrary Detention adopted on 4 December 2015, in which it considered that Mr Julian Assange was arbitrarily detained by the Governments of Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In that opinion, the Working Group expressed the view that Mr Assange is 'entitled to his freedom of movement and to compensation'. The petition requests that the House of Representatives do all within its power to end Julian Assange's detention.

I received legal advice on the implications of the findings of the Working Group in February 2016. It is important for the Standing Committee on Petitions to appreciate that the Working Group's opinion is directed at the United Kingdom and Sweden; not Australia. Australia cannot intervene in the legal processes of another country, just as we would not countenance other states intervening in Australian legal processes. I also note that the opinions of the Working Group are not legally binding on states.

Mr Assange has been afforded due process by authorities in the United Kingdom, and has avoided lawful arrest by choosing to remain in the Ecuadorian Embassy. Mr Assange will need to address his situation through legal processes in the United Kingdom and Sweden, with the assistance of his legal advisers.

However, the Australian Government stands ready to provide Mr Assange with the same consular assistance it would give to any other Australian in these circumstances should he request it, in accordance with the *Consular Services Charter*. I enclose a copy for the Standing Committee's consideration.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

from the **Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Bishop**