

THE TURNBULL COALITION TEAM

CCHQ 2016



17 June 2016

Ms Elaine Pearson
Australia Director
Human Rights Watch
Suite 1106, 5 Hunter Street
SYDNEY NSW 2011

Dear Ms Pearson

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. On behalf of the Coalition Members of Parliament and candidates I am pleased to respond to your survey.

Australia's future depends on how well we can continue to grow and shape our economy.

Only the Liberal and National Parties have an **economic plan** to do that and ensure Australia's future.

We have a clear plan to transition the economy from the mining and investment boom to a stronger and more diverse economy.

The key elements of our national economic plan for jobs and growth are:

- An Innovation and Science programme bringing Australian ideas to market. This means greater investment and more jobs and opportunities for our young people;
- A New Defence Industry plan that will secure an advanced defence manufacturing industry in Australia. This will create thousands of new hi-tech, higher paying jobs;
- Export Trade Deals that will generate more than 19,000 new export opportunities. These will create many more jobs for our urban and regional families;
- New Tax Incentives, which will include tax cuts for more small businesses. More than two million businesses can benefit, to deliver more growth and jobs; and
- A Strong New Economy with more than 200,000 jobs expected to be created.

Our national economic plan and management is already paying dividends. Last year our economy continued to grow creating almost 300,000 new jobs, many of them in small business.

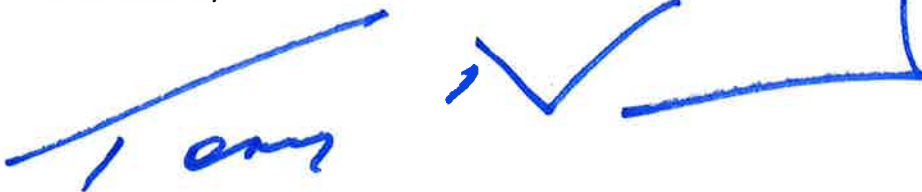
We cannot put economic growth and the jobs that come with it at risk with a return to Labor and their debt and deficits, high taxing, big spending ideas.

Only a Liberal and National Party Government can protect Australia's future.

Once announced, our policies will be available at www.liberal.org.au and www.nationals.org.au.

Thank you for communicating the Coalition's commitments to your members.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tony Nutt', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tony Nutt
National Campaign Director

Response to Human Rights Watch

Domestic Policy

Australia has a strong tradition of commitment to human rights and respect for the rights and freedoms of every individual. The Turnbull Government recognises that to enjoy these rights, people need to be able to do so free from discrimination.

The Turnbull Government welcomes a vigorous, broad and balanced debate about human rights in Australia that acknowledges the important role of discrimination law while also advancing measures to protect our political freedoms, such as freedom of speech, opinion, religion, association and freedom of the press. This complements a key priority of the Turnbull Government - ensuring the economic empowerment of all Australians, through policies which support jobs and economic growth.

Whistleblowers

The Turnbull Coalition Government will introduce new whistleblower protections for people who disclose information about tax misconduct to the Australian Tax Office. Whistleblowers will have their identity protected and will be protected from victimisation and civil and criminal action for disclosing information to the ATO.

These protections will encourage whistleblowers to come forward and help support compliance with Australia's tax laws.

Same sex marriage

The Turnbull Government believes that a decision on same-sex marriage should be made by a vote by all Australians via a plebiscite as soon as possible after the election.

If the majority of Australians vote 'yes' in the plebiscite, the Parliament should respect that decision and legalise same-sex marriage in Australia.

Indigenous incarceration

A Turnbull Coalition Government will work closely with the States and Territories that control the criminal justice system to address the issues that have led to the unacceptably high rate of Indigenous incarceration. This includes increasing education, training and employment opportunities and tackling the misuse of alcohol and other drugs.

A key initiative is the development of a 'prison to work' blueprint to reduce repeat offences by addressing long term unemployment, one of the key drivers of contact with the criminal justice system.

This builds on the momentum generated in 2015 when the States and Territories agreed to work with the Government to get people from prison to employment and in so doing help Indigenous people take the first practical steps towards a better life.

Asylum seekers

Under the Coalition, Australia has one of the world's most generous humanitarian programmes.

The Coalition has committed to increase the humanitarian programme from its current level of 13,750 to 18,750 by 2018-19. In addition, we are welcoming 12,000 more refugees to Australia as a result of genuine concern for the human tragedy and unprecedented displacement of people from Syria.

Australia's generous humanitarian programme is the result of the Coalition's successful border protection policies which includes temporary protection visas, regional processing and turnbacks where it is safe to do so. These policies have secured the border and restored integrity to the immigration system.

The Coalition is proud of its border protection record, we have:

- stopped the boats;
- ended the deaths at sea;
- removed all the children from detention; and
- closed 17 detention centres.

Foreign Policy

The Turnbull Coalition Government has a strong record of respecting human rights worldwide. This reflects our underlying values and our commitment to promoting and protecting human rights internationally.

Manus and Nauru Detention Centres

The refugee determination process in Papua New Guinea is managed and administered by the Papua New Guinea Government according to their domestic laws and processes. If a transferee is found to be a refugee, they are permitted to permanently settle in PNG.

The refugee status determination process in Nauru is managed and administered by the Government of Nauru, in accordance with their domestic laws and processes. If a transferee is found to be a refugee, they may settle in Nauru for up to ten years or settle in Cambodia.

Death penalty in Asia

The Coalition does not support the death penalty. If Australia is elected to the Human Rights Council, we will be a strong advocate for global abolition of the death penalty, one of our core human rights objectives.

Human rights in the region

Australia engages with the international community with active, practical advocacy, sensitivity and fairness, and a willingness to speak out against human rights violations and abuses. The Coalition Government will continue to invest in strengthening governance around the world with the aim of developing transparent, accountable and responsive institutions to ensure the advancement of human rights for all.

Under the Coalition, Australia will continue to play an active part in promoting Human Rights Council resolutions on freedom of expression, the safety of journalists, human rights defenders, human rights and the internet, and civil society. Independent national human rights institutions and a strong and robust civil society play a crucial role in preserving and advancing human rights. The Coalition is a strong advocate for strengthening the capacity of national human rights institutions to promote and protect human rights.

China, Vietnam and Laos

Strengthening our human rights engagement is an important component of the Coalition Government's bilateral relationships in our region. An important means of achieving this has been Ministerial-level human rights dialogues where issues have been discussed in an open and frank forum.

The 12th Australia Vietnam human rights dialogue was held in 2015 and provided an important opportunity to raise human rights concerns and discuss practical ways to strengthen Australia's engagement on human rights issues and implement international human rights standards.

In March 2016, the Coalition Government signed the Declaration on Enhancing the Australia-Vietnam Comprehensive Partnership, which lays the foundation for enhanced cooperation on security, economic, immigration, defence and human rights. The Coalition Government is supporting Vietnam's efforts to strengthen its legal framework through the Human Rights Technical Cooperation (HRTC) programme. This programme is making an important contribution to strengthening Vietnam's gender equality law, ethnic minority rights law, labour law and human trafficking law. We are also working alongside Non-Government Organisations and national human rights institutions, providing aid for capacity building, and engaging through the UN General Assembly Third Committee and the UN Human Rights Council.

Australia and Laos have held biennial human rights dialogues since initiated under the Howard Government in 2006. The last dialogue was held in 2015. In addition, the Coalition Government provides Laos with human rights capacity building under the Australia-Laos Human Rights Technical Cooperation Fund.

The Government has raised its concerns about the human rights situation in China with the Chinese Government through a variety of channels, including ministerial meetings; our bilateral Human Rights Dialogue; officials in Beijing and Canberra; and public statements. The Government recently co-sponsored a joint statement in the UN Human Rights Council alongside eleven other countries.

Public Diplomacy

The Coalition is actively campaigning for Australia's candidacy for membership of the Human Rights Council for the 2018-20 term. Under a Coalition Government, Australia's focus will be on advancing the rights of women and girls; strengthening governance and democratic institutions, promoting freedom of expression and advancing the protection of human rights.

Indonesia

While Australia recognises and respects Indonesia's sovereign right to apply its laws, Australia is strongly opposed to the death penalty and supports its universal abolition.

The Australian Government condemns all violence in the Papua provinces. The rights of all citizens should be upheld and credible allegations of human rights abuses should be investigated.

Embassy officials visit the Papua provinces regularly and engage a wide range of contacts, including civil society, NGOs and religious leaders. These visits inform our assessment of the situation on the ground, which we assess has improved in recent years although clearly there are still problems to be addressed.

Australia believes firmly that the freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental human right belonging to all individuals – including those belonging to religious minorities and that this freedom must be respected in all countries in accordance with international human rights law.

Australia is a strong advocate for non-discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Women's Empowerment in the Pacific

The Coalition recognises that violence against women is an attack on basic human rights and severely limits a women's ability to participate in social, economic, cultural and political life. Under the Coalition, around 80% of Australian aid investments now address gender issues in their implementation.

Through development cooperation and aid investments, Australia is supporting our regional partners with practical initiatives to help empower women and girls and allow them to live without the fear of violence. These services are often provided through partnerships between the Government and private sector organisations. For example, in Papua New Guinea the Coalition Government has partnered to create a mobile banking system for women stallholders so they can bank their earnings at the market and avoid being exposed to danger by carrying cash.

Australia has become recognised as a world leader in supporting gender equity and women's empowerment. For this reason, the Coalition appointed Natasha Stott-Despoja as Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls to ensure that the empowerment of women and girls is a central focus of Australia's diplomatic and development concerns. By advocating internationally for women's equal participation in political, economic and social affairs, the Ambassador is able to advance global progress, peace and stability.