

Australia's input on the imposition of the death penalty and its impact – Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.

Question 8: Additional input

The Australian Government is absolutely opposed to the death penalty and has a longstanding policy commitment to the worldwide abolition of capital punishment. Australia also stands resolutely against the use of arbitrary detention, arrest and sentencing, including to death, as a coercive tool to influence state-to-state relations and exercise leverage over foreign governments.

Currently several Australian citizens have been sentenced to death or are potentially facing the death penalty overseas. We consider the death penalty to be a violation of the right to life and to be cruel, inhuman and degrading. While the Australian Government does not seek to interfere in the judicial processes of other countries and upholds utmost respect for judicial sovereignty, we will continue to be a strong advocate for the rights of Australian citizens and the universal abolition of the death penalty.

While these Australians are seeking to have the death penalties overturned in the courts, the Australian Government actively monitors developments and provides consular assistance to these Australians and their families. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade develops individual case management strategies for the support of Australians at risk of facing the death penalty overseas - including coordination of consular and legal assistance and diplomatic representations on their behalf to relevant counterpart governments; and internationally on Australia's long-standing and principled opposition to the death penalty.

In addition, the Australian Government also offers financial assistance for legal costs to Australians potentially subject to the death penalty abroad through the Serious Overseas Criminal Matters Scheme, administered by the Attorney-General's Department.

The Australian Government also vigorously supports clemency pleas by any of the Australians who are still sentenced to death at the end of the court process.