



Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

MR0308
27 February 2008

Media Release

Peak Legal Bodies From Around the World Unite to Call For Guantanamo Bay Closure

The Law Council has joined forces with fellow peak legal bodies from around the world, representing hundreds of thousands of lawyers, to call for the closure of the United States prison facility at Guantanamo Bay.

The President of the Law Council, Ross Ray QC, said, "David Hicks may no longer be held at Guantanamo Bay, but many others remain imprisoned, including some who were literally children at the time of their arrest, more than five years ago. Worse still, there is now the very real prospect that, after years in secret detention, up to six detainees will be convicted by the US Military, based on evidence obtained using torture, and put to death."

The Law Council has co-signed a letter, initiated by the Canadian Bar Association, the Law Society of England and Wales and the Paris Bar, calling for Guantanamo Bay to be closed.

"As a signatory to the letter, we share the view that the continued existence of the prison facility at Guantanamo Bay, and the long term detention of suspects without trial, constitutes a grievous affront to the rule of law," Mr Ray said.

The letter has been signed by 34 professional bodies, including the Swedish Bar Association, the Law Society of Ireland, the General Council of the Bar of South Africa and the Australian Bar Association.

It was sent this week to the President of the United States and the Canadian Prime Minister.

"Six years after it opened, it is time to close the doors of Guantanamo and ensure that those detained there are either brought promptly to trial before a properly constituted court or released. On that point, the lawyers of the world are in consensus," Mr Ray concluded.

The letter is available on the Law Council's website at www.lawcouncil.asn.au

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The Law Council of Australia exists to represent the legal profession at the national level, to speak on behalf of its constituent bodies on national issues, and to promote the administration of justice, access to justice and general improvement of the law.

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