



CHRIS HAYES MP – South China Sea – 3 December 2014

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (13:42): Yesterday in parliament a petition was tabled concerning the long-standing maritime and territorial dispute in the South China Sea between six governments in the region, namely China, Vietnam, Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines.

For a number of years, peace and stability has occurred in this area through the parties observing the guidelines established under the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which they signed onto in 2002. However, more recently, stability in the region has been threatened following the deployment of a Chinese oil rig in the vicinity of the Spratly and Paracel Islands. Although the drilling rig has now been removed, clearly stability in the South China Sea has been impacted. Because of this, the VCA has compiled a petition containing more than 11,000 signatures opposing the provocative and unilateral actions in these disputed areas.

Clearly, Australia shares a common interest with members of the international community in maintaining peace and civility in the region. Threats and the use of force by any country involved in the dispute are neither warranted nor acceptable. For that reason, I have lodged a notice of motion calling on the Australian government to play a role in encouraging parties to the dispute to resolve their claims through peaceful means and in accordance with international law.