

THE 2010 FEDERAL ELECTION AND TIBET



What is each party saying about Tibet? What are they saying about our relationship with China and Australia's role in the wider world? Have they been matching their words with action? What lies behind the spin?

Tibet is almost unique in its ability to draw supporters from all sides of politics. Nonetheless, the approach of each party to Tibet, to China and to foreign affairs as a whole can be very different. And while foreign policy is rarely an election issue itself, the outcome of a federal election inevitably has implications for Tibet and the role we can expect Australia to play on the world stage.

So thinking about Tibet this election? We present here the bare facts on Labor, the Coalition and the Greens – what they are saying, what they are doing, how they have been voting – and offer an exclusive analysis on what your vote could mean.

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OVERVIEW

PARTY	Publicly expressed concern over human rights in Tibet	Publicly supported the Middle Way policy	Raised cases of political prisoners (1)	Made statements or asked questions in Parliament (2)	Number of motions introduced on Tibet	Voting record on Tibet (3)	Party leader has met the Dalai Lama this term	Membership of All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet (4)	Number of members who participated in 2009's delegation to Dharamsala
LABOR	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	0	1	No (5)	12 (10%)	2
COALITION	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	1	1	Yes	7 (8%)	1
GREENS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	10	Yes	5 (100%)	2

NOTES

1. A "yes" in this column means that one or more members of the party have made representations on behalf of one or more political prisoners, either by making a statement in Parliament, putting a question to the Foreign Minister, writing to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or questioning officials during Senate Estimates.
2. A "yes" in this column means that a member of that party has made a statement in Parliament or sought information on Tibet and the actions of the Australian Government by putting a question to the relevant Minister.
3. The Senate has voted on 10 motions in relation to Tibet since the last election. This number represents how many of those motions the particular parties voted in favour of. See later section on "Voting Records" for more detail.
4. The percentages shown here are the percentage of each party's total number of MPs and Senators who identify themselves as members of the Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet.
5. Kevin Rudd met the Dalai Lama in 2007 while Leader of the Opposition but did not meet the Dalai Lama during his Prime Ministership.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE 2007-2010 PARLIAMENT

2008 was a historic year for Tibet. Following a violent crackdown on protestors in Lhasa on 14 March, a wave of overwhelmingly peaceful demonstrations quickly swept across almost all inhabited areas of the Plateau with Tibetans unleashing decades of frustration at unrelenting Chinese oppression. As the Beijing Olympic Torch Relay made its way around the globe it was dogged at every step by protests from Tibetans and Tibet supporters over the worsening crackdown. New light was shed on the realities facing those in Tibet and governments around the world spoke out over China's handling of the protests and in support of a peacefully negotiated settlement between the Chinese Government and the Tibetan people.

The 2008 uprising and ensuing crackdown drew a strong reaction from the international community, including Australia. ATC was quick to capitalise on the renewed interest in Tibet at the Government level and has worked hard to build and consolidate support for Tibet in the Federal Parliament. (For further information on Tibet and the Australian Parliament visit the political section of the ATC website: www.atc.org.au/tibetpolitik)

However, efforts to increase further the level of Government support for Tibet and to build from mere statements and gestures towards decisive action have been frustrated by three distinct trends of the past few years: a) China's growing assertive on the world stage, particularly in regards to Tibet, b) Australia's increasing economic interdependence with China, and c) the "China Fantasy": a blind faith among many western governments that China's economic growth will lead inevitably to democracy and greater human rights protection, the policy prescription being that we should pursue a policy of engagement and encouragement towards China.

Fears surrounding the global financial crisis may have increased further the impetus to maximize trade with China. The relationship reached new heights in June 2010 during the visit of China's future president Xi Jinping with the signing of over \$10bn of new deals. Chinese investments in Australia now reach beyond the resources sector and include the building of port facilities and other infrastructure. Paralleling the growth in business ties, we are also witnessing the forging of ever-closer relationships between Australian and Chinese Universities, most recently the signing of an agreement between Australia's premier university – the Australian National University in Canberra – and the Communist Party's Central Party School, a training ground for Communist Party officials.

The Government's reluctance to push harder on Tibet during the latter part of its first term may also be explained by a series of major challenges in the Australia-China relationship. The arrest of Rio Tinto's Stern Hu, China's anger at the granting of a visa to Uyghur leader Rebiya Kadeer, the failed bid by Chinese mining giant Chinalco and the Joel Fitzgibbons affair meant the Government spent much of 2009 and early 2010 in damage control.

The so-called "China Fantasy" has become the subject of much recent debate, with many analysts doubting its validity and arguing that the international community must do more to call China to account over its human rights record.

All in all, it has been a period of intense highs and intense lows. Support and awareness of Tibet has grown among parliamentarians. But those sympathetic to Tibet and wary of China's growing assertiveness have found the domestic political climate very unfavourable towards meaningful action.

Nonetheless, returning to the positives, the last three years have seen Australian parliamentarians, in partnership with the Tibet Information Office and Australia Tibet Council, take several important steps to build support for Tibet from Australia.

The Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet forms the nexus of support for Tibet in Canberra. Since 2008 the group has grown from an ad hoc collective to a solid team of highly informed and engaged parliamentarians from both houses and across the political spectrum working strategically throughout the year to try and bring positive outcomes for Tibet. The core members include Michael Danby MP (convenor), Hon Peter Slipper MP (co-convenor), Senator Bob Brown (co-convenor), Senator Nick Xenophon (co-convenor), Ms Melissa Parke MP, Senator Scott Ludlam, Senator Sarah Hanson-Young and Kelvin Thompson MP.

Most significantly, July 2009 saw the first (unofficial) Australian parliamentary delegation to Dharamsala, with Michael Danby, Peter Slipper, Nick Xenophon, Melissa Parke, Scott Ludlam and Sarah Hanson-Young heading to India to learn first hand about the challenges facing the Tibetan people, learn about the work of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and get to know the many Dharamsala-based Tibetan cultural and educational institutions and NGOs.

Since returning from Dharamsala the delegates have worked consistently and strategically in partnership with Australia Tibet Council to create concrete outcomes for Tibet and build the community of engaged Tibet supporters in the Parliament.

Read more

“The Reality of the China Fantasy.” *Foreign Policy*, 16 June 2010.

http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/06/16/the_reality_of_the_china_fantasy

“Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet: 2009 Activity Report”

http://www.atc.org.au/component/option,com_docman/task,doc_download/gid,64/

“Who is Xi Jinping? China’s future leader to visit Australia and why pushing him on Tibet can be in our national interest” Simon Bradshaw, 18 June 2010.

<http://www.atc.org.au/news-mainmenu-28/1-latest/1343-who-is-xi-jinping>

Tibet Politik (blog). A regular update on all things Tibetan in the Australian Parliament.

<http://www.atc.org.au/tibetpolitik>

EACH PARTY IN DEPTH

LABOR

What they are saying?

From Labor's National Platform and Constitution:

"Labor considers the promotion of universal human rights to be a core foreign policy objective that cannot be traded off against other diplomatic and economic goals ...Effective human rights diplomacy supports international and regional security and is in Australia's national interest."

In April 2008, one month after the start of the 2008 uprising in Tibet, Kevin Rudd raised the issue publicly during his first visit to China as Prime Minister. Kevin Rudd said in his speech at Peking University:

"Australia, like most other countries, recognizes Chinese sovereignty over Tibet but we also believe it is necessary to recognize there are significant human rights problems in Tibet. ...We recognize the need for all parties to avoid violence and find a solution through dialogue. As a long-standing friend of China, I intend to have a straightforward discussion with China's leaders on this."

Talking more broadly, the then Prime Minister also pledged a strong relationship *"built on the ability to engage in direct, frank and ongoing dialogue"* and to *"engage in principled dialogue about matters of contention"*.

When commenting on Tibet former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Foreign Minister Stephen Smith consistently emphasised three points in this order: i) Australia's recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet and adherence to a "one-china policy". ii) The Government's continuing concerns over the human rights situation in Tibet. iii) A call for both parties to reach a resolution through dialogue.

New Prime Minister Julia Gillard is yet to comment on Tibet, China or indeed any matter of foreign policy. We expect her position to be largely consistent with that of her predecessor.

What have they done?

The Government has made very few public statements on Tibet since the close of the Beijing Olympics. Representations on behalf of specific political prisoners have been made through the annual confidential Australia-China Bilateral Human Rights Dialogue and, in some instances, directly through the Australian Embassy in Beijing. ATC has been critical of the dialogue for its lack of accountability or focus on concrete outcomes. The Government has also discussed Tibet with visiting Chinese officials, most recently with Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping (21 June 2010). The contents of these discussions remain confidential.

Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd turned down two opportunities to meet the Dalai Lama. He did not meet the Dalai Lama as Prime Minister (he met as Leader of the Opposition in 2007).

While expressing continued support for the Tibet-China dialogue, the Government has not acknowledged the Dalai Lama's Middle Way policy, commented on the dialogue's lack of progress, or responded favourably to suggestions from ATC for providing more active support to the dialogue process.

Labor Senators, subject to binding caucus votes, have voted down a succession of motions on Tibet moved by the Greens and Independent Senator Nick Xenophon since 2008.

On the other hand, a small number of individual MPs and Senators have been highly active in promoting the issue of Tibet in the Parliament. Notably, Michael Danby MP (Member for Melbourne Ports) has chaired the Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet and led the first (unofficial) Australian Parliamentary delegation to Dharamsala (seat of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile) in 2009. Ms Melissa Parke MP (Member for Fremantle) has also been highly active. Melissa was a member of the delegation to Dharamsala, later reporting to the House of Representatives on the visit and meeting with Tibetans and Tibet supporters in her constituency.

Our Analysis

After his very public remarks on Tibet back in 2008 the former Prime Minister became almost silent on Tibet during the latter half of its first term. Analysts argue that Labor is pursuing a “holistic” approach to China. The party may believe that strengthening economic ties and building political trust places the Government in a stronger position to encourage improvements in China’s human rights situation through formal diplomatic channels. That said, the global economic crisis, coupled with a succession of challenges in the Australia-China relationship (the arrest of Stern Hu, visit of Rebiya Kadeer, failed Chinalco bid and the Joel Fitzgibbons affair) have inevitably left the Government more cautious when it comes to China and Tibet. Will Labor’s policy of quiet diplomacy prevail? The jury is still out.

Read more

Full transcript of Rudd's speech in Beijing
<http://www.pm.gov.au/node/5857>

“No Room for Tibet in Rudd's ‘New Sinology’?” (Our own commentary on the former Prime Minister's latest pronouncements on China)

<http://www.atc.org.au/news-mainmenu-28/1-latest/1318-no-place-for-tibet-in-rudds-qnew-sinologyq>

COALITION

What are they saying?

The Liberal's Federal Platform gives few clues as to an overall policy on China or Tibet, though it lists *"an important network of relationships with our Asia-Pacific region"* as the first of its three main international interests. *"Working to advance less developed nations and promote human rights"* and *"participating in international organizations including the United Nations"* are included in its list of priorities in foreign and trade policy.

In March 2008 Brendan Nelson, then Leader of the Opposition, called on the Prime Minister to protest against the crackdown in Tibet when he headed to China the following month. Liberal Senators supported an urgency motion from the Greens calling for *"strong, decisive action by the Government to insist that international laws and norms, including those safeguarding human and political rights and media access are observed by China"*. Around the same time Hon Andrew Robb MP, then Opposition Foreign Affairs Spokesperson stated: *"There is no doubt that there are continuing human rights issues in China. Mr. Rudd should feel in no way constrained from discussing Tibet."*

What have they done?

Being that they have been in Opposition, it is unreasonable to compare directly the activities of the Coalition since 2007 with those of Labor, whom of course have been the ones tasked with taking real action.

Looking closely we see that the number of Coalition MPs and Senators taking an active interest in Tibet behind the scenes more or less matches that of their Labor colleagues. As with Labor, a number of individual Coalition MPs have worked hard to promote the issue of Tibet within the Parliament. Hon Peter Slipper MP (Member for Fisher), a Co-Convenor of the Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet has been among the strongest and most consistent voices for Tibet in Canberra. Peter was a member of last year's delegation to Dharamsala and in November 2009 was Australia's sole representative to the World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet in Rome. Senator Russel Trood, who in November 2009 was part of the first official Australian delegation to visit Lhasa, has repeatedly quizzed officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade during Senate Estimates on matters relating to Tibet.

In a peculiar shift from the stance taken by her predecessor Andrew Robb in 2008, last year Opposition Foreign Affairs Spokeswoman Hon Julie Bishop MP accused the Prime Minister of *"needlessly offending China from the outset with his decision to lecture China about human rights"*. While the statement was undeniably a mere effort to score points over Labor, ATC was concerned at the willingness of the Coalition to reverse its stance for the purposes of domestic political gain.

In December 2009 Opposition Leader Tony Abbott met with the Dalai Lama in Sydney.

Our Analysis

While there has been a clear pattern in Labor's approach to China and Tibet since 2008, the Coalition has proved more unpredictable. After a phase of goading the

Government for not “standing up to China”, the Opposition later slammed the Prime Minister for mismanaging the lucrative Australia-China relationship by, among other things, raising the Tibet issue. Tony Abbot has one up on the former Prime Minister this term, having met with the Dalai Lama shortly after taking leadership of the Opposition. On the negative side, the Coalition has seemed all too willing to use the very real challenges in the Australia-China relationship as opportunities for domestic political gain. Going by their earlier rhetoric, one is tempted to believe that a Coalition Government would bring a shift from Labor’s softly softly approach and towards to a more forthright and less compromising stance with China. Then again, a look back at the Howard years gives us nothing to believe that this would be the case.

GREENS

What are they saying?

From the Green's policy book:

"Australia must act diplomatically to promote democracy, peace and security, ecological sustainability and human rights."

"Lasting solutions to conflicts both between and within nations depend on delivering social, environmental and economic justice to the peoples involved, and on ensuring they can exercise their civil and political rights."

The Australian Greens have been outspoken in their support for the Tibetan people, calling consistently for stronger action from the Government to support the Dalai Lama's efforts towards a peacefully negotiated settlement with the Chinese Government.

What have they done?

Beginning in March 2008 with a series of initiatives to encourage a stronger reaction from the Government to the events unfolding in Tibet, the Greens have taken every opportunity this term to act on behalf of the Tibetan people. Greens Senators have been active in the Senate, in committees, in the media and at public events

Since returning from Dharamsala in 2009, Greens Senators Sarah Hanson-Young and Scott Ludlam have been among the most active Tibet supporters in the Parliament. Sarah Hanson-Young has publicly urged the Prime Minister to meet the Dalai Lama on many occasions and supported a number of ATC campaigns. Scott Ludlam has repeatedly quizzed officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade over Tibet and, along with Senator Bob Brown, spoken publicly at several Tibetan events. In November 2009 Scott Ludlam was a member of the first parliamentary delegation to visit Lhasa, Tibet.

The Greens have put a total of 14 motions on Tibet to the Senate since the 2007 federal election.

Our Analysis

Long-time advocates for Tibet, the Greens have worked consistently over the last term to encourage stronger and more direct action from the Government to support a peacefully negotiated settlement between China and Tibet. Critics argue that the Greens' approach lacks an understanding of the complexities of foreign policy. Indeed, in the Senate both the Government and Coalition have consistently voted down Greens motions on Tibet on the ground that such complex issues should not be addressed by way of motions, though arguably this is a mere avoidance tactic. Nonetheless, the Greens have been effective in bringing the Tibet issue to the attention on the Senate and have ensured Tibet remains on Australia's political agenda. An expected increase in the number of Greens Senators would increase further their ability to do so.

VOTING RECORDS

A total of 15 motions on Tibet have been put to the Australian Parliament since the 2007 federal election: 1 in the House of Representatives and 14 in the Senate.

Of these 15 motions, only 10 proceeded to a vote (all of which were in the Senate).

The sole motion in the House of Representatives was moved by Hon Peter Slipper MP (Liberal) and supported strongly by Michael Danby MP (Labor) but did not receive the broader backing of their parties and did not proceed to a vote.

Of the 14 motions in the Senate, 7 were moved by Senator Bob Brown (Green), 4 by Senator Scott Ludlam (Green), 1 by Senator Sarah Hanson-Young (Green) and 1 jointly by Senator Sarah Hanson-Young (Green) and Senator Nick Xenophon (Independent).

Barring the rare occasions on which an MP or Senator “crosses the floor”, in the Australian Parliament MPs and Senators vote in accordance with the consensus of their party, sometimes referred to as a “binding caucus vote”.

Of the 10 motions which proceeded to a vote, only an “urgency motion” from Senator Bob Brown three days after the beginning of the 2008 crackdown and calling for “strong, decisive action by the Government to insist that international laws and norms, including those safeguarding human and political rights and media access are observed by China” was supported by all parties and passed. Both the Government and the Opposition rejected all subsequent motions on Tibet, usually on grounds that “complex international matters should not be dealt with by means of formal motions”. These included a number of motions simply acknowledging the situation in Tibet, reinforcing the Government’s stated policy, condemning China’s use of the death sentence or welcoming positive developments such as the resumption of the Tibet-China dialogue.

The matrix below details the voting records of each party on since the 2007 federal election. Below that are examples of the content of these motions.

CHAMBER	SUBJECT	DATE	MOVED BY	VOTE		
				LAB	COA	GRE
SENATE	The Dalai Lama’s 75 th birthday	22 Jun 10	Ludlam	No	No	Yes
SENATE	Welcoming Xi Jinping to Australia	22 Jun 10	Ludlam	No	No	Yes
SENATE	51st anniversary of Tibetan Uprising	10 Mar 10	Ludlam	No	No	Yes
SENATE	Encouraging Rudd to meet the Dalai Lama	25 Feb 10	Hanson-Young / Xenophon	No	No	Yes
SENATE	Death sentences for Tibetan protestors	03 Feb 10	Brown	No	No	Yes
SENATE	Inviting the Dalai Lama to the Senate	20 Sep 09	Hanson-Young	No	No	Yes
SENATE	Referring Tibet to a Committee Inquiry	17 Sep 09	Ludlam			
SENATE	50th anniversary of Tibetan Uprising	12 Mar 09	Brown	No	No	Yes
SENATE	8th Round of Tibet-China dialogue	16 Oct 08	Brown			
SENATE	Statement by Zhang Qing Li	24 Jun 08	Brown	No	No	Yes
HOUSE	Support for Tibet-China dialogue	05 Jun 08	Slipper			
SENATE	Support for Tibet-China dialogue	15 May 08	Brown			
SENATE	UN intervention in Tibet	19 Mar 08	Brown	No	No	Yes
SENATE	General	18 Mar 08	Brown			
SENATE	Lhasa crackdown	17 Mar 08	Brown	Yes	Yes	Yes
				1	1	10

22 Jun 2010

Motion congratulating the Dalai Lama on celebrating his 75th birthday. Moved by Senator Scott Ludlam (Green). Voted down by the Government and Opposition.

That the Senate-

- (a) congratulates His Holiness the Dalai Lama on celebrating his 75th birthday on 6 July 2010;
- (b) notes the Dalai Lama's unstinting commitment to non-violence, his pragmatism in seeking a "Middle Way" approach in order to reach a peaceful and practical solution for the future of Tibet and its people and his work in promoting inter-religious understanding;
- (c) acknowledges the Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize awarded in 1989, his US Congressional Gold Medal in 2007 and the many other awards and honours presented for his wide-ranging work in advocating peace, non-violence, inter-religious understanding, universal responsibility and compassion; and
- (d) expresses its hopes for a peacefully negotiated settlement between the Tibetan people and the People's Republic of China

22 June 2010

Motion welcoming Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping to Australia and acknowledging the continuing concerns of the Australian people over human rights in China and Tibet. Voted down by the Government and Opposition.

That the Senate-

- (a) welcomes Xi Jinping, Vice President of the People's Republic of China;
- (b) acknowledges the continuing concerns of the Australian people over human rights in China and Tibet; and
- (c) expresses its hopes for a productive visit, including a frank and wide-ranging dialogue on matters of concern to both China and Australia.

10 March 2010

Motion on the 51st Anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising. Moved by Senator Scott Ludlam (Green). Voted down by the Government and Opposition.

That the Senate-

(e) notes:

- (i) that 10 March is the 51st anniversary of the Tibetan uprising and the Dalai Lama's exile to India and the 2nd anniversary of the beginning of widespread unrest across Tibetan areas in 2008,
- (ii) the continuing human rights concerns in Tibet, noted publicly in Beijing by our Prime Minister on 9 April 2008,
- (iii) the resumption of direct contact between Chinese officials and representatives of the Dalai Lama on 26 January after a gap of 15 months,
- (iv) the meeting, on 18 February, between the Dalai Lama and President Barack Obama in the White House, and, later that day, between the Dalai Lama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Under Secretary of State and Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Maria Otero,
- (v) that the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Policy for the peaceful resolution of the Tibetan situation respects the territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China and seeks to resolve the Tibet issue within the framework of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, and
- (vi) the right of the Tibetan people to maintain their unique language, religion and culture under international law, and

(f) Calls on the Australian Government to:

- (i) continue to monitor the progress of talks between the Chinese Government and representatives of the Dalai Lama,
- (ii) follow President Barack Obama in explicitly supporting the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Policy for a peaceful resolution of the Tibetan situation, and
- (iii) renew and strengthen its support for a peaceful lasting and mutually agreeable resolution of the Tibetan situation, including entering into substantive multilateral initiatives with other concerned governments to encourage meaningful negotiations on the points raised in the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People.

25 February 2010

Motion congratulating Tony Abbott and Barack Obama on meeting the Dalai Lama and encouraging Kevin Rudd to do the same. Moved by Senators Sarah Hanson-Young (Green) and Nick Xenophon (Independent). Voted down by the Government and Opposition.

That the Senate-

- (a) congratulates the Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott, and the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, for meeting His Holiness the Dalai Lama in December 2009 and February 2010 respectively; and
- (b) calls on the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the earliest possible opportunity.

3 February 2010

Motion on the death sentence in China, including the sentencing of Tibetans Lobsang Gyaltzen and Loyak. Moved by Senator Bob Brown (Green). Voted down by the Government and Opposition

That the Senate, noting the similar resolution of the European Parliament on 25 November 2009-

- (a) reiterates its longstanding opposition to the death penalty in all cases and under all circumstances;
- (b) recalls Australia's strong commitment to working towards abolition of the death penalty everywhere and emphasises once again that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights;
- (c) recognises the positive move by China's Supreme People's Court, in January 2007, to review death sentences but deplores the fact that it has not led to a significant decrease in the number of executions in China and remains concerned that China still carries out the greatest number of executions worldwide;
- (d) urges the Chinese Government to adopt a moratorium on the death penalty immediately and unconditionally, this being seen as a crucial step towards abolition of the death penalty;
- (e) strongly condemns the executions of the two Tibetans, Lobsang Gyaltzen and Loyak, and of the nine persons of Uighur ethnicity following, respectively, the events in March 2008 in Lhasa and the riots of 5 July to 7 July 2009 in Urumqi; and
- (f) calls on the Chinese authorities to suspend all the other death sentences passed by the Intermediate People's Courts of Lhasa and Urumqi and to commute those sentences, in the case of persons duly found guilty of acts of violence, to terms of imprisonment.

17 September 2009

Motion referring the situation in Tibet to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade. Moved by Senator Scott Ludlam (Green). Failed to receive backing from the either of the main parties, never proceeded to a vote.

That the following matters be referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade for inquiry and report by 26 November 2009-

- (a) the human rights situation in Tibet subsequent to the events of March 2008;
- (b) the status of dialogue between the Government of the People's Republic of China and representatives of the Dalai Lama; and
- (c) policy and dialogue options by which the Australian Government can preserve a positive relationship with China while supporting genuine progress towards a peaceful and mutually-agreed resolution on the Tibet-China issue,

20 August 2009

Motion inviting the Dalai Lama as a distinguished visitor to the Senate. Moved by Sarah Hanson-Young (Green). Voted down by the Government and Opposition.

That the Senate-

- (a) notes that His Holiness the Dalai Lama:
 - (i) is a Nobel Peace Prize laureate,
 - (ii) addressed a joint sitting of the United States (US) Congress in 1991 and received a US Congressional Medal in 2007,
 - (iii) addressed the European Parliament in 2001 and 2008, and
 - (iv) has been made an honorary citizen of Canada; and
- (b) extends an invitation to His Holiness the Dalai Lama to sit in the distinguished visitors gallery on the floor of the Senate during Question Time, on Thursday, 26 November 2009, the last sitting day of 2009.

12 March 2009

Motion on the 50th Anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising. Moved by Senator Bob Brown (Green). Voted down by the Government and Opposition.

That the Senate-

- (a) notes:
 - (i) the 50th anniversary of the Tibetan uprising of 10 March 1959 and the Dalai Lama's exile to India, and
 - (ii) the continuing human rights concerns in Tibet;
- (b) acknowledges the Tibetans' half century of peaceful resistance to policies undermining their religion, culture and livelihoods and expresses solidarity with the Tibetan people;
- (c) notes with concern the Chinese Government's outright rejection of the Tibetans' Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People, a detailed proposal for resolving the Tibet issue through proper implementation of existing provisions for regional ethnic autonomy contained in the constitution of the People's Republic of China; and
- (d) acknowledges that recent unilateral efforts by concerned governments, including Australia, have failed to secure meaningful negotiations on Tibet's future.

24 June 2008

Motion on Tibet's Communist Party Secretary's statements during the Olympic Torch Relay in Lhasa. Voted down by the Government and Opposition

That the Senate-

- (a) notes the statement in Lhasa on 21 June 2008 by Tibet's Communist Party Secretary General Zhang Qing Li, that "we will certainly be able to totally smash the splittist schemes of the Dalai Lama clique";
- (b) calls on the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Smith) to ascertain if Mr. Li was reflecting the policy of the People's Republic of China and, if so, how that policy is being carried into effect; and
- (c) asks the Minister to find out how many Tibetan citizens, arrested since violence erupted in Lhasa in March 2008, remain in custody and, as of 23 June 2008, how many have been brought to trial.