

23 June 2020

Notice of Motion, Cr Jackie Watts: Julian Assange

Motion

That the Future Melbourne Committee:

1. Notes that WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange was a resident of the City of Melbourne, and founded WikiLeaks while occupying premises in Carlton.
2. Reasserts the City of Melbourne's staunch support for Freedom of the Press and the Rule of Law and the extension of both to all people.
3. Notes that despite controversy over many years since its inception, WikiLeaks has played an important and effective role in disclosing war crimes, corporate fraud, environmental damage and other criminal abuses.
4. Notes that Mr Assange is currently being held on remand maximum security prison in the United Kingdom (UK) without charge, locked in a cell for 23 hours per day.
5. Notes that Mr Assange is now in very poor health and is facing extradition from the United Kingdom to the United States of America (USA) in an unprecedented Espionage Act prosecution for engaging in journalistic activity and, if convicted, faces 175 years imprisonment and potentially the death penalty.
6. Notes that the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has called not only for Mr Assange's immediate release but also that he be compensated, and that the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture, Nils Melzer, has examined Mr Assange in Belmarsh Prison and believes that his life is in danger.
7. Notes and supports Amnesty International's call for the UK to not extradite Mr Assange to the USA and that the UK abide by its obligations under international human rights law that forbids the transfer of individuals to another country where they would face serious human rights violations.
8. Notes that other major civil liberties, media freedom and human rights groups have spoken out against the arrest and treatment of Julian Assange and include:
 - The International BAR Association of Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)
 - The European Council
 - The Australian Federal Parliamentary Group headed by Mr Andrew Wilkie
 - The Federal Parliament of Catalonia
 - The Federal Parliament of Austria
 - The former Foreign Minister of Germany
 - The Mexican Prime Minister
 - A Doctors Group of over 150 German Doctors
 - The 130 Prominent Germans Group
 - Many international Lawyers Groups
 - Teachers Groups in Melbourne and Sydney
 - Writers and Journalist Groups
 - PEN International
 - City Councils including Geneva, Yarra, Darebin, Moreland and Byron Shire
 - Freedom of the Press Foundation
 - Electronic Frontier Foundation
 - American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
 - The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
 - Reporters Without Borders
 - Human Rights Watch (HRW)
 - Australian Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA)
 - Blueprint for Free Speech
 - Center for Constitutional Rights
 - FAIR Media Watch
 - Code Pink
 - Cage UK
 - Human Rights Law Centre (Australia)
 - Digital Rights Watch (Australia)

- IFEX (global network of organisations that promote and defend the right to freedom of expression and information)
 - Fair Trials (global criminal justice watchdog)
 - Freedom of the Press Foundation
 - Electronic Frontier Foundation
 - The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
 - The New Yorker
 - International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)
 - A global petition compiled of approximately 400,000 signatures
9. Requests that on behalf of the Council, the Chief Executive Officer or the Lord Mayor write to the Australian Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs forthwith requesting that the Australian Government immediately intervene in this matter to ensure that UK authorities urgently address Mr Assange's poor health and mistreatment and in doing so, uphold the Human Rights of an Australian citizen unjustly imprisoned.

Mover: Cr Jackie Watts

Seconder: Cr Rohan Leppert