



Office of Senator Jacqui Lambie Senator for Tasmania

28 October 2025

To Whom It May Concern

Re Dr Kay Danes OAM, Australian Citizen

I am writing in my capacity as both an Australian Senator, and as somebody who knows Dr Kay Danes and her extraordinary work in the areas of human rights and veteran welfare, to support the claim by Dr Danes that her detention in Laos in 2000 to 2001 was arbitrary and unjustified.

As a duly elected Senator in the Australian Parliament, I am writing to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dr. Danes [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

lifelong contributions to international human rights and social justice have been recognised at the highest levels, including:

- Being awarded the prestigious Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her human rights and social justice service, one of Australia's highest civilian honours established in 1975 to recognise achievement or meritorious service.
- Being a finalist in the Australia Day Awards, one of Australia's most prestigious national recognition programmes that celebrates citizens who have made outstanding contributions to their communities and the nation.
- Receiving the "Service Above Self Award" from Rotary International, a rare honour acknowledging those who embody Rotary's ideal of service above self—representing the highest level of commitment to humanitarian causes recognised by this global organisation of 1.4 million members.

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- Being an Honorary Member of the Golden Key International Honorary Society that recognises scholastic achievement and excellence among college and university students. Membership is only granted to distinguished leaders who have made substantial contributions to society.
- Receiving the 2024 American Ingenuity Award for her critical role in supporting American allies escaping Taliban persecution following the Afghanistan withdrawal.

Dr. Danes' personal story demonstrates remarkable resilience. In 2000, she and her husband Kerry were arbitrarily and wrongfully detained in Laos under fabricated charges, as recognised by the Australian Government. Despite facing extreme adversity—denied due process, arrest warrants, or the ability to mount a defence in closed court proceedings—she emerged from this ordeal with an unwavering commitment to justice rather than bitterness.

Upon returning to Australia following their Presidential Pardon in 2001, negotiated by the Australian Government, Dr. Danes dedicated herself to human rights advocacy and has made numerous significant contributions, including:

- Work with the Australian Defence Force where her research and advocacy influenced policy reforms for ADF personnel. Dr. Danes helped develop the "Hostage—Survive with Dignity" training programme for overseas-deployed personnel. She also contributed significantly to numerous Australian Senate inquiries, Royal Commissions into Defence and veteran suicide, and various humanitarian initiatives to improve the wellbeing of Defence personnel and First Responders.
- Human rights advocacy acknowledged by the Australian Government, particularly her work in Afghanistan from as early as 2008 through the Afghanistan Humanitarian Crisis (2021 to 2024), during which she helped coordinate the evacuation of 4500+ Mission Essential Personnel working for the Australian Government.
- Collaboration with the US Centre for Public Policy Analysis where she represented prominent human rights issues to US Congressional forums alongside Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-RI), Rep. George Radanovich (R-CA), Rep. Mark Green (R-WI), Rep. Dan Smith (D-WA) and US Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA) to successfully advocate for the release of 58 political prisoners in Laos.
- Service in diplomatic roles, working overseas for the Australian Embassy as a Special Projects Officer and for the British Embassy as a Human Resources Manager. Her expert testimony and policy recommendations have directly influenced Australian Government reviews, legislation, and social programmes aimed at protecting vulnerable populations and strengthening democratic institutions.

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Meanwhile, her husband resumed service in Australia's elite Special Air Service Regiment with Top Secret clearance—demonstrating the Australian government's complete confidence in Kay and Kerry's innocence.

Dr. Danes' unique experience and expertise could be invaluable assets to [REDACTED] particularly in:

- Contributing to [REDACTED] foreign policy discussions on human rights and Veteran wellness.
- Advancing humanitarian initiatives that strengthen [REDACTED] global leadership through her three decades of experience working in high-risk and hostile environments—expertise that has proven invaluable in creating effective crisis response strategies, developing resilience training programmes, and implementing human rights protection frameworks that can benefit [REDACTED] diplomatic, military, and humanitarian missions.
- Providing expert consultation for the [REDACTED] Task Force on [REDACTED] Hostages and [REDACTED] Wrongfully Detained Abroad.
- Contributing as a leading academic on international humanitarian law, with PhD research focussing on the professionalisation of the humanitarian sector, demonstrating exceptional ability and potential to substantially benefit [REDACTED] through continued scholarly contributions.

[REDACTED] and Australia share foundational values of democracy, rule of law, and human rights. Dr. Danes not only exemplifies these shared principles but has demonstrated throughout her career an unwavering moral character and ethical fortitude.

Dr Danes' record is devoid of any actions that could be construed as involving moral turpitude—indeed, her life's work actively opposes such behaviour through her advocacy against injustice, corruption, and human rights abuses.

The Australian government's thorough vetting of both Dr. Danes and her husband for positions requiring the highest security clearances further attests to her impeccable character. Her contributions have actively strengthened the alliance between our nations, embodying the moral leadership that both countries champion globally.

I respectfully urge you to [REDACTED] recognising that her extraordinary abilities and contributions align perfectly with [REDACTED] interest in attracting individuals of exceptional merit who enhance your [REDACTED] standing in the international community.

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Yours Sincerely

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Independent Senator for Tasmania

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