



MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
SINGAPORE

2 November 2005

Mr Kevin Rudd, MP  
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Parliament House  
Canberra  
Australia

*Dear Shadow Minister Rudd*

I refer to your letters of appeal on behalf of Mr Nguyen Tuong Van dated 24 October 2005, which were addressed to the Prime Minister, Senior Minister, other Cabinet Ministers and me.

I understand the deep disappointment felt by you and other leaders of the Australian Labor Party about the President's decision to turn down the appeal for clemency. I can only say this: in advising the President, the Cabinet considered all relevant factors including the specific points you raised. We also took into account the numerous representations, formal and informal, made by several leaders of the Australian Government, including the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. It was not a decision that we took lightly.

We have a responsibility to protect the people of Singapore from the scourge of drug addiction which has destroyed many lives and inflicted great suffering on many families. We also have a responsibility to prevent Singapore from becoming a conduit for the trafficking of illicit drugs in the region. Mr Nguyen imported almost 400 grams of pure heroin which would have supplied more than 26,000 doses to drug addicts.

As the public has been informed that you have written to the Singapore Government, I am releasing this reply to the media.

*Yours sincerely*  
*George Yeo*

GEORGE YEO