



**APOLOGY, NOW MUST BE FOLLOWED BY ACTION –
Response to apology from Mr. Abe as the Prime Minister**

Friends of “Comfort Women” in Australia have been seeking justice for survivors by calling on the Japanese government to: officially apologise, provide compensation adhering to international standards, and commit to non-repetition by, but limited to, correct teaching of history.

An apology from Mr. Abe as the Prime Minister of Japan during a question and answer session in the Japanese Diet yesterday is a welcomed step forward to realising justice for the survivors.

The Australian Jan Ruff O’Herne said, “I’m delighted – it’s a step forward. His apology illustrates how he is responding to international pressure to apologise. Now the next step is to offer apology addressed to the survivors.”

“Because an apology only has value when it’s followed by action,” said Ms. O’Herne.

Friends of “Comfort Women” in Australia’s (FCWA) Campaign Co-ordinator Anna Song said, “Prime Minister Abe’s apology is indeed good news. However, at this stage his apology is still ambiguous.”

Ms. Song said, “This official Prime Ministerial apology was not directly addressed to the survivors and nor was it a statement within the context of committing to future actions to follow. Yesterday’s apology stood by the Kono statement made by former Chief Cabinet Secretary made in 1993, yet until now no action has been carried out to as a follow up to that apology.”

“For Prime Minister’s apology to become unambiguous, I think he should hold a press conference at which he makes a statement of official apology addressed directly to the survivors. Further he needs to show the international community that his apology is not one of just words but of finally taking responsibility in respect of the “Comfort Women”. They survivors have waited over 60 years for this. I think an unambiguous apology is the least they deserve ” said Ms. Song.

FCWA organised a “Wednesday Demonstration” to bring justice to survivors outside the Japanese consulate in Sydney on 7th March 2007 which contributed to building international pressure for Mr.Abe to respond to survivors’ demands.

FCWA is also supporting House Resolution 121 in the US Congress, which calls for an “official, unequivocal and unambiguous apology” from the Japanese government. This resolution is up for vote in May after Mr. Abe’s scheduled visit to Washington.