

carefully considered in reaching the decision.

Mr Keelty, who was also a lead player in the AFP investigation that led to the Bali Nine arrests, said at Rush's final appeal that he was the lowest ranking among the members of the syndicate.

"He had very little knowledge and very little role in the enterprise," Mr Keelty told the Denpasar District Court last September.

"He was a very young person. His role was a very minimal role. Scott Rush was not an organiser."

The AFP was aware of the decision but it was a matter for the Indonesian authorities, a spokesman said tonight.

"As such, it would be inappropriate for the AFP to make further comments," he said.

In Canberra, Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd, who as prime minister made a personal appeal to Dr Yudhoyono to spare the lives of the death row member of the Bali Nine, said Australians would greet the decision with relief.

"[Having] spoken to the Rush family who come from Brisbane, on a number of occasions over the last period of time, I'm sure the family will welcome the decision with great relief," he told parliament.

Mr Rudd said it was bipartisan policy in Australia to oppose the death penalty and the federal government was "in close touch" with Rush and his family.

"Mr Rush's parents have been informed," he said. "As parents, they have shouldered a heavy burden over these years of waiting."

Mr Rudd said there were still two more Australians on death row in Indonesia who have also lodged appeals against their sentences.

"We will continue to provide consular support to both men [alleged Bali 9 ringleaders Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran], and their families," he said.

Opposition foreign affairs spokeswoman Julie Bishop said Rush was a young man when he was caught trafficking drugs and had a somewhat troubled past.

If there was ever a lesson for people to understand they must abide by the laws of other countries, Rush's was one, she said.

"This young man has learned a very, very harsh lesson," Ms Bishop told parliament.

'I often think about the firing squad'

Last August, Rush made an emotional, 13-minute statement to the Denpasar District Court during his appeal, as his parents watched from court's front row.

"I often wake up having nightmares," he said.

"I often think about the firing squad and how long it would take to die."

The Denpasar District Court finished hearing Rush's appeal last October and handed its recommendation to the Indonesian Supreme Court, who announced their decision today.

Rush's lawyer said his client would now hope for Australia and Indonesia to agree to a prisoner exchange deal.

"Hopefully, he can go back to Australia one day," he said.

The so-called ringleaders of the Bali Nine - Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran - are also waiting for the outcome of judicial reviews in the hope they can escape the firing squad.

If their appeals fail, they must rely on President Yudhoyono granting them clemency.

Amnesty International welcomed the Rush decision but said Australians needed to remember there were two more citizens on death row in Indonesia.

Spokeswoman Hannah Harborow said Amnesty believed the decision bode well for the pending appeals of Chan and Sukumaran and hoped there would be a decision on their cases made soon.

Rush now joins a number of other members of the drug smuggling plot who are also serving life sentences in Bali's Kerobokan Prison, including Martin Stephens, Matthew Norman, Si Yi Chen, Tan Duc Than Nguyen and Michael Czujaj.

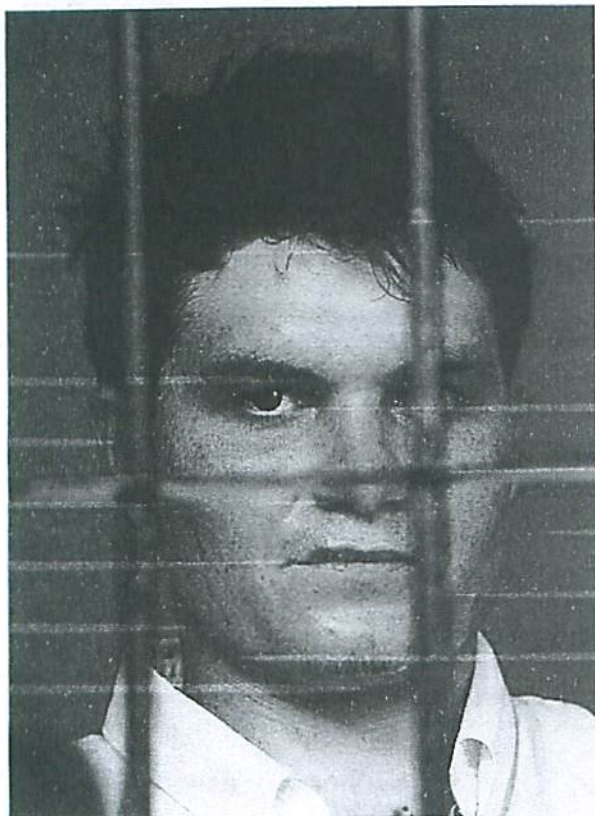
Stephens had his final appeal against a life sentence rejected in January.

The final member of the drug ring, Renae Lawrence, is serving a 20-year sentence, which has already been reduced by almost two years.

- AAP with Georgia Waters and Tom Allard

Bali Nine's Scott Rush spared firing squad

May 11, 2011 - 3:00AM



Relief ... It is understood the Supreme Court granted his appeal on the basis that he had shown remorse for his actions.

Bali Nine drug courier Scott Rush has won a desperate bid for his life after the Indonesian Supreme Court reduced his sentence to life in prison.

Rush, 25, from Chelmer in Brisbane's west, had been facing the death penalty for his part in a 2005 plot to smuggle more than eight kilograms of heroin from Bali to Australia.

The Indonesian Supreme Court decision to commute his sentence to life, citing the fact that Rush had shown remorse for his actions while also taking into account his age, was announced last night in Canberra by the Foreign Minister, Kevin Rudd.

The *Jakarta Post* reported the court, led by judge Artidjo Alkostar, also agreed with Rush's claim that he acted only as a courier, not the mastermind, of the smuggling attempt.

Rush was only 19, and on his first overseas trip, when he was arrested at Ngurah Rai Airport with 1.3kg of heroin strapped to his legs underneath his clothing.

'A great relief'

The decision was greeted with relief from his family, with his father Lee Rush saying they would continue fighting to free their son.

"It's a great relief, it's been a long time coming," he told reporters in Bali.

"The sentence was far too harsh from the beginning for the crime that he committed.

"We had hoped we could get a lighter sentence.

"We must continue to get Scott and the other Australians back home where they belong."

It is understood the Supreme Court voted 2-1 in favour of granting the judicial review, which if it had failed, would have left Rush's life depending on clemency from Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

"The reasons they gave is that he's still young, he's been repentant and his role was only as a courier," Rush's lawyer Frans Hendra Winata said.

AFP testimony considered

It is understood the testimonies of former Australian Federal Police commissioner Mick Keelty and current Deputy Commissioner Mike Phelan were