

In the past months we have seen improvements within the Immigration system, and these must be commended.
But there is still a long way to go.

Although 7 Immigration Values based on "integrity" were announced in 2009, Australia's Immigration Policies continue to strip Asylum Seekers of their basic human rights and worse, compound the trauma already experienced by people in need. The detention of Asylum Seekers- people feeling from unimaginable circumstances- by a wealthy, thriving state such as Australia is an unnecessary defiance of basic Human Rights and Human Values.

The Stated goal to make Detention a last resort has so far failed: Asylum Seekers are more often in detention than not.

- **Detention must be used only when necessary, and not as a first 'solution'.**

No matter how much money is spent "improving detention facilities", Freedom is still deprived. It has been stated by The United Nations that the Detention of Asylum Seekers is a violation of Australia's obligations to Human Rights and International Law, and this **must** be recognised and acted upon.

In July 2008, Senator Evans stated that the Government "rejects the notion that dehumanising and punishing unauthorised arrivals with long-term detention is an effective or civilised response."

However, Asylum Seekers are still remaining in detention for months at a time, with 6 months being the length of time before Ombudsman review.

6 months is far too long to spend in Detention.

Detention must be for a maximum of three weeks to address security and health concerns, and any time after that must be applied for through an independent body, with evidence showing a need to retain a person in detention.

- The Detention Values must be applied to offshore arrivals.

Refugees arriving by boat must be granted the full rights they are entitled to as human beings, equal to those who arrive by plane on Australia's mainland.

The Refugee Convention states a state must provide protection for Refugees no matter what their form of transport or means of arrival. It must be therefore be recognised that seeking Asylum is not only legal, but a basic human right.

Australias Immigration policy must ensure its consistency with these values and afford equal rights to all Asylum Seekers regardless of their method, or place, of Arrival.

- Children must not be detained in any forms of detention facilities and must be held in Community Detention only. The Detention of children in guarded facilities is detrimental to their wellbeing, and a gross violation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

I write after witnessing the traumatic effects of Detention upon people who have already suffered too much. Detention is an outdated, inhumane practice that must end.

The label and stigma must be removed from Asylum Seekers, and they must be seen for what they are : human beings.

The Australian Anthem contains two lines which should be remembered and respected when dealing with issues such as these. Up until now we have failed them.

For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share...