

27/10/2014

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

**Concern about the Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment
(Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Bill 2014**

I have serious concerns about the Government's proposed *Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Bill 2014* and its impact.

What worries me most about the new laws is that they:

1. ***Give unprecedented power, without oversight, to one person – the Minister of Immigration***
2. ***Will harm people.***

I am proud that Australia played a pivotal role in the development of the Refugee Convention and that we are a country built on fairness and multiculturalism. I am deeply saddened by the way we treat asylum seekers and this bill takes things even further – giving absolute power to one person to determine people's fate and inflicting devastating harm on people.

By introducing temporary visas, removing references to the refugee convention, changing the way refugees are processed and limiting the number of refugee visas Australia issues each year, this bill removes natural justice, fair process and the power of the courts to review.

I am concerned about:

- **The introduction of temporary visas**

TPVs were trialled in Australia from 1999 to 2008 and proved to be harmful, ineffective, wasteful and cruel. They damaged people, forced them into a life of limbo and anxiety and caused people to live in a constant state of worry and anxiety. No family reunion also forced women and children onto boats.

- **Ignoring the Refugee Convention**

The Bill removes safeguards for asylum seekers, as well as denying them access to legal representation and protection from serious harm. This will lead to refugees being returned to situations of danger, including torture, in breach of Australia's current law and our non-refoulement obligations.

- **Establishing a new processing system**
The Bill establishes a ‘fast track’ refugee determination process, undermining our current robust and fair system and reducing life and death decisions to a brief, cursory assessment. This significantly increases the likelihood of sending people back to grave danger.
- **Limiting the number of visas issued**
A cap on the number of protection visas issued each year will deny refugees the chance to get on with their lives and leave them in a state of anxious limbo, as they wait for their number to come up in what is effectively a ‘visa lotto’.

As an elected member of Parliament you have the ability to represent my concerns and stop this bill being passed. These laws attack our Australian values - like helping people in trouble, like giving people a fair go, like keeping a check on political power.

I urge you to stand up to protect refugees facing harm and the independence of our legal system from political interference.

Yours faithfully

Elizabeth & Nathaniel Taylor

49 Beal Street,
Birregurra, VIC, 3242