

Patricia KOWAL


George Town
TASMANIA 7253


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Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2611

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Ending Indefinite and Arbitrary Immigration Detention Bill 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute my views to the Committee about this Bill.

For a few fleeting days after the Nymboida fires of 8 November 2019 I felt like a refugee in my own country. To have totally lost everything, to see such unprecedented devastation and to see first hand and to feel such human despair was such a humbling experience.

Amongst my now treasured possessions is a green face cloth a friend gave me. Green amongst the charred ruins of our home of 35 years and a cloth to wash, to cool to use again and again.

I wonder what is a treasured possession for the many people who have reached out to Australia for safety only to find themselves in long term detention without a clear path to follow.

This is why I write to you in strong support of Andrew Wilkie's Bill. You nor I do not know when or how we, our friends or family may need to ask for help from another country. If ever this happens, we would hope to be treated within the International Human Rights framework and given a chance to rebuild our lives in safety with respect.

After the fires it was a battle with insurance, local & state departments, NGOs, accommodation, health issues and fragile family relationships due to trauma. Escape was an option...to Tasmania. We took it and feel safe now. Being so far away, pandemics and with border closures, family and friends are such distant memories. As I say, just a taste of being a refugee in my own country.

What must it be like for the hundreds of asylum seekers the Australian Government has detained indefinitely without a clear, consistent way to negotiate being accepted as a refugee. Such people have already contributed so much to our country, many more will do the same given a chance.

My solace is knitting...much of my treasured yarn stash was saved, added to and now is being conjured into garments of all sorts to be sold. All monies go to Tassie Nannas, committed to financing refugee placements in Canada.

Australians know what to do...we just need our Government to play their part.

The time has come to pass this Bill.

Sincerely yours,

Patricia KOWAL