

Friday July 31, 2009

The Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

Regarding the Migration Amendment (Immigration Detention Reform) Bill 2009

To the Committee

I support the proposed bill. As stated in the joint response from A Just Australia and the Refugee Council of Australia, "the simple fact is that there are no studies or statistics that show that current forms of immigration detention achieve their objectives of minimising risk to the community, combating high-rates of non-compliance or deterring others from immigration offences. ... Indeed the available evidence is to the contrary, showing that asylum seekers have a vested interest in remaining engaged with the immigration process to resolve their protection claims."

I strongly endorse, however, the additional recommendations as proposed by AJA –

- (1) The immigration detention values announced on 29 July 2008 must apply to Christmas Island, not just mainland Australia.
- (2) The Immigration Detention Reform Bill must clearly state that children should not be detained in any kind of secured immigration detention facility.
- (3) The Immigration Detention Reform Bill must clearly enshrine an independent review process of a person's detention after 90 days and the recommendations should be enforceable.

I commend the government on its efforts so far to create a fairer and more humane refugee policy framework and urge it to further hone its policy detail toward achieving this end.

Yours sincerely, Bronwyn Bell

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