

I write to make a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration's consideration of the *Ending Indefinite and Arbitrary Immigration Detention Bill 2021*.

I write as someone who spent four years in Papua New Guinea in the 1970s through the Australian Volunteer Abroad program. My experiences there and in other overseas countries have led me to be involved in matters of international aid for the rest of my life. I have been involved with bodies such as Australian Volunteers International, Oxfam, UNHCR and the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre over many years.

Over the last quarter of a century or so, I have been dismayed to see Australia's once shining reputation in refugee matters - our welcoming of large numbers following WWII and from Vietnam after the war there, for example - being trashed by the draconian treatment of those fleeing danger and persecution.

To restore our international reputation, we need to change our policies. An excellent first step would be to pass the *Ending Indefinite and Arbitrary Immigration Detention Bill 2021*, so that we make indefinite mandatory detention illegal, providing workable alternatives for dealing with asylum seekers and refugees. People who are fleeing horrors should have their needs and rights catered for, in line with international human rights laws. Access to the right to work, to safety and to reasonable health care are needed. The government should not be leaving such matters to charities.

Bringing this Bill before the Parliament is essential. All parties need to declare voting on it to be a conscience vote. The Australian public needs to be able to ascertain which members are in favour of retaining treatment of refugees and asylum seekers that arguably amounts to torture.