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27 July 2009

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

Dear Secretary,

MIGRATION AMENDMENT (IMMIGRATION DETENTION REFORM) BILL 2009

Firstly, let me commend the government on the easing of the harshest of the Howard Government "Reforms" relating to asylum seekers and refugees..

However, there is still a way to go.

My submission to your committee is that all legislation which applies in Australia regarding asylum seekers and refugees should also apply to those on Christmas Island. There should never be a part of Australia which is treated differently, in that people in one area have substantially fewer rights than in another. Asylum seekers and refugees should have access to our courts in the same way that Australian citizens do.

Secondly, children should NEVER be kept in detention. Even if the place they are kept is not labelled a detention centre, if their freedom of movement is compromised in any way, then that is equivalent to detention, and should not be permitted.

Thirdly, there should be independent and timely review of detention status for all detainees.

Many of the new arrivals are coming from places where we are an occupying power, or where there is internal disruption by armed forces. We should have sufficient compassion to recognise that most arrivals are genuine and should be treated with dignity and humanity.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Robin Gibson (Mrs)