

Submission to Senate re Detention of refugees

I would like to suggest that a reasonably short time limit be placed on how long people can be held in detention. This would lessen emotional and physical distress to refugees and also be more cost effective. If people are going to be sent away better to do it quickly and if they are going to be accepted here better to allow it quickly and link them up with community supports so they have a good feeling about where they have come. To lock people up for years must leave them with great hurt and bitterness which probably takes at least a generation to resolve.

I think it is unacceptable for children especially unaccompanied children to be in any kind of detention. There must be a way of housing them in the community preferably with at least one care-giver from their own family. Damaging their future mental health is actually not good for our country as well as making their lives difficult.

I think Australians, with government encouragement and where appropriate assistance, would be capable of welcoming and helping new arrivals to settle in and become useful and valued members of our society.

Thank you considering my viewpoints.

Helen Kvelde