

Submission in relation to the

Migration Amendment (Prohibiting Items in Immigration Detention Facilities) Bill 2017 [Provisions]

By Tracie Aylmer

Introduction

As I have been traumatised by domestic violence, I am in the unique position of being able to know exactly how the asylum seekers and refugees feel whilst being in detention. For me, it does not matter how they arrive – they asked for Australia’s help. They deserve to be treated with respect, as they are people, not objects. They deserve to be given permanent visas, and to live in the community with the intent of having a new life full of promises and dreams. They deserve to contribute fully to Australia.

By taking away their methods of communication with loved ones, it brings back memories for me. A similar thing happened to me, when I was living with someone who committed domestic violence up to the point of nearly murdering me.

This is why I needed to write this submission.

A ‘thing’ and what would be classified as ‘prohibited’

The Minister has an issue with objects classified as ‘things’, and wants to prohibit anything that could guarantee that the public would know what is going on within detention centres. He has great fear that we would find out that traumatised people are being traumatised further. Otherwise, he would not wish for ‘things’ such as mobile phone and SIM cards to be classified as ‘prohibited’.

While the assumption is that the Minister would be taking away objects with the intent of reducing criminality in relation to those under s501, this is a blanket approach. Due to this, it is obvious that the Minister is terrified that I (and others) would be handing the International Criminal Court information that makes the Minister liable to Article 7 in relation to crimes against humanity for the mistreatment of legitimate refugees and asylum seekers begging for Australia’s help. As the International Criminal Court is currently analysing relevant evidence pertaining to the mistreatment of asylum seekers and refugees, the Minister is too late to stop the wheels of justice.

Those that have been classified under s501 are solely Australia’s responsibility. There needs to be consideration of other ways in order to deal with the criminality of people placed under detention after they have been in prison. Obviously, kicking them out of Australia does more harm to Australia’s reputation, as instead of being mature, Australia is telling others to deal with the problem. This does not fix the situation. In fact, it creates more problems, particularly for Australia.

Therefore, it is beyond comprehension that the Minister would want to make ‘things’ that he subjectively considers as objects as ‘prohibited’.

Detainees and their classification thereof

The Minister has decided to consider the blanket approach in classifying all asylum seekers and refugees as ‘criminals’, even though they have no charges against them. No matter how they come to Australia, they should be treated as people, and not objects.

Classifying a 'detainee' as an object to be made hostage due to the ever changing rules that the Minister decides upon has all the hallmarks of the patterns of domestic violence on a grand scale. Just like a perpetrator of domestic violence, the Minister should either mend his ways and see asylum seekers and refugees as a benefit to our society, or eventually suffer the consequences. We, as a society, have had enough of his changing rules for people, and we will find justice for these people who have been treated severely for no reason other than to be made hostages.

'Things of concern'

The Minister is obviously so terrified of other people communicating that he wishes to classify a communicating device such as a mobile phone as a 'thing of concern'. Behrouz Bouchani has already made a video of what happens within Australia's detention centres which is being shown to the London Film Festival, solely using his mobile phone. It is too late to classify mobile phones as 'things of concern' when the truth has already been made public. Why close it all down now? Why be so worried, when we already know the torture going on within the detention centres?

The Minister is too late in his obstruction of justice. The international community is scathing of Australia for a very good reason. Australia is not being humane, and trying to make 'things of concern' as 'prohibited' will only turn the spotlight even further onto Australia.

The use of dogs in relation to traumatised people

As a previously traumatised person, I used dogs as a healing process. However, the way that some dogs are trained are in order to further traumatise people. These asylum seekers and refugees come from warzones. Using dogs to target and attack these people is disgraceful, and incredibly unAustralian. These people have asked for help, not hindrance.

The Minister believes that dogs trained to attack would force them to go back to warzones that the Minister could not even stomach to go to. The Minister obviously has fear of strong people, being very weak himself.

Limitless boundaries

Demanding that these people go back to warzones is unconscionable. The Minister has an obvious thirst for power, and has forgotten that he represents *all* of Australia, not just his own interests. He is so determined to hold onto power by any means possible, he has forgotten that people beyond himself exists.

Australia has only 24 million people. We need more people. We also need our reputation back. The Minister has destroyed all semblance of a reputation that Australia may have had.

The Minister's thirst for power will never be quenched. It is external to him, and his needs are internal. He will never be satisfied, no matter how limitless his boundaries are.

Conclusion

This latest amendment will not help to curtail the organised crime aspect of those in detention. Its intent is clearly to stop the never ending amount of information about the mistreatment of asylum seekers and refugees held in detention for indefinite periods of time. The Minister's intent is clear, particularly since he classified legitimate refugees going to USA as having 'Armani' clothes on.

The Minister only has intent on destroying the lives of asylum seekers and refugees, in every manner possible. People asking for a new life away from warzones are told to go back, in every way that could possibly exist. The Minister himself would refuse to go back if he was in their shoes, but that will never matter to him.

These people hold no threat whatsoever. The Minister himself is the threat, to Australia's international reputation. By traumatising asylum seekers and refugees taking away their methods of communication and using dogs to do so, I hold no confidence that the Minister could do his job. He is unfit for his position.

He is a textbook case of domestic violence, only on the majority of people within Australia. He needs his power to be minimised. Rejecting this amendment is one of many ways to do it.