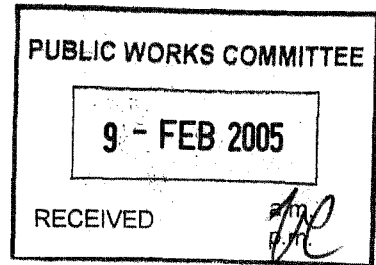


WESTERN REGION ETHNIC COMMUNITIES COUNCIL



9 February 2005

SUBMISSION 3

The Secretary,
Public Works Committee
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

The Western Region Ethnic Communities Council Inc. (WRECC) is an umbrella advocacy body that represents the diverse ethnic communities living in the Western Region of Melbourne.

I am writing to register the Western Region Ethnic Communities Council's strong concern on the lack of appropriate consultation and other issues related to the proposed extension to the Maribyrnong Immigration Detention Centre (MIDC) by the Commonwealth Government.

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) proposes this extension for additional accommodation to increase the number of people being detained at the MIDC facility.

The Western Region Ethnic Communities Council has been informed by its members that DIMIA has not adequately consulted with owners of the land surrounding the MIDC site nor the communities that may be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed extension.

The Western Region Ethnic Communities Council is particularly disturbed about the short time (3 week turnaround) for the public to comment on the proposed MIDC extension and the inappropriate timing of advertising for submissions over the January holiday period. With submissions due on the 9th February 2005, this timing and short time period has disallowed opportunity for people to meet in the community and prepare a response to DIMIA's proposal to extend the MIDC.

In addition to the above consultation issue, we also wish to question whether the proposed "portable" nature of the accommodation will improve amenity and conditions for detainees as claimed by DIMIA.

Finally, we wish to also question the appropriateness of 'detention' and the reasons why the Commonwealth Government is intent on extending the MIDC and increasing by 50 the number of detainees to 126 at that site.

We await a reply from you on these matters of community concern raised by the Western Region Ethnic Communities Council, as the umbrella body for ethnic communities in the Western Region of Melbourne.

Yours sincerely,
Sydney Vas.
Secretary, Western Region Ethnic Communities Council.