



Asylum Seeker Resource
Centre,
12 Batman Street,
West Melbourne 3003
t: 03 9326 6066 f: 03 9326
5199 www.asrc.org.au

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BY: MIG [Signature]

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Department of House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
29 October 2008

Dear Committee Secretary,

Further to our evidence provided to the Joint Standing Committee in Sydney on Friday, 24th October 2008, I write with supplementary information as requested by the Hon. Mr Tony Zappia regarding the dates of arrival and detention of two women at Maribyrnong Detention Centre.

Ms I arrived on 17 July 2008 and was released from detention some two months later on 18 September 2008. She held a valid visa on arrival and her travel documents were in order. She passed through immigration uneventfully. She was stopped and searched by Customs who read her personal diary and surmised from the contents that she might seek asylum. On this basis she was detained. She was in detention for 9 weeks at a cost of \$125.00 per night amounting to \$7875.00. The financial cost is calculable – the emotional cost of being locked up, afraid and alone is not. Her detention lasted for 7 weeks despite on 29 July 2008 the Minister calling for detention to be a last resort.

Mrs G an Iraqi widow and mother of 3 children is still in detention. She arrived in Australia on 27 July 2008 without documents but has since provided documents attesting to her identity. It is beyond belief to think that this middle-aged mother could present any risk to the community. She has a valid claim for asylum and a chance to provide a safe future for her children. She would not jeopardise this by fleeing or not complying with immigration laws. Thus far her 95 days in detention has cost \$11,875. If she had been released on ASAS the cost would be \$2040.

I thank you for your interest in these cases and the matter of mandatory detention. As raised before the Committee we are able to discuss any matter raised in further detail and to assist the Committee as is required.

Yours sincerely

Pamela Curr
Campaign Coordinator ASRC