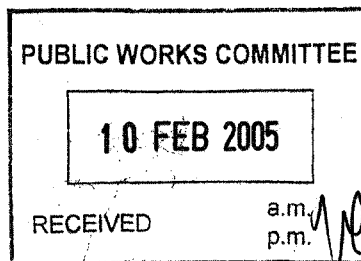


8 February 2005



SUBMISSION .....6

The Hon. Judi Moylan  
Chairperson  
Federal Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Public Works  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Moylan

**PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR MARIBYRNONG IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTRE - ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION AND RELATED WORKS.**

Please accept this letter from Maribyrnong City Council to the joint standing committee as;

1. A formal preliminary submission to the proposed works to the Maribyrnong Immigration Detention Centre;
2. An expression of interest to provide more detailed evidence to the public hearing on 23 February 2005; and
3. A notice of intention to provide a formal submission for the public record following a full and comprehensive community consultation process.

Maribyrnong City Council has had a long history in supporting the wellbeing of detainees, and as a key local authority Council has a particular interest in the proposed works to the detention centre.

Maribyrnong City Council supports the stated intention of the Federal Government to improve the quality of life of existing and future detainees, however the current proposal for the provision of additional accommodation does raise a number of concerns.

The following issues represent an initial summary of the key concerns that will inform Maribyrnong City Council's final written submission and any oral evidence submitted at the public hearing:

1. Increasing the population of the detention centre by 50 people and the philosophy of improved separation may, as an unintended consequence, lead to the increasing detention of women, children and families.
2. The need for additional detention accommodation may be interpreted as the Federal Government's recent, more aggressive and less humane approach to managing over stayers.
3. That the proposed extension may not be able to accommodate the increase in the population of the detention centre by 50 people and may lead to unnecessary overcrowding and increased tensions within the facility.
4. \$7 million is a considerable amount of tax payer's funds to be spent on a short term interim arrangement.

5. There has been no cost benefit analysis of this interim proposal compared to alternative community based solutions to managing over stayers.
6. There has been no health or social impact study prepared to inform the proposal.
7. Maribyrnong City Council strongly opposes the imprisonment of families and young children. However Council believes that detainees are entitled to and should be encouraged to access local health and community services.
8. That the Federal Government provides additional funding for the provision of community based support services for detainees and that these costs are included in the core operational budgets of the detention centre.
9. A significant residential development is proposed for the site adjacent to the Detention Centre. As such number of planning and amenity issues need to be resolved with Council and the developers.

As you may be aware Maribyrnong City Council has also had some concerns about the process for the calling of public comments on the proposed works. Specifically the timing of the advertisement occurred over the 'holiday' period when key organizations were closed and Council was in abeyance. Further the relatively short deadline had little regard for appropriate community consultation and appropriate governance processes for Boards and Committees of Management to prepare formal responses.

The issue of the proposed works to the detention centre and the impact on detainees is particularly serious and complex. As such Maribyrnong City Council will convene a public forum at the Town hall on Thursday 17 February 2005 to allow residents and interested agencies and individuals an opportunity to discuss the impacts of the proposal, inform Maribyrnong Council's formal submission and to determine any other action.

I look forward to expanding on this submission in person.

Yours Sincerely

Cr. Michelle MacDonald

Mayor