



# New inquiry into immigration detention

A wide ranging inquiry into the criteria for immigration detention and alternatives available was announced today by the Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Migration.

There are currently 461 people in immigration detention across Australia. Some of these are seeking asylum in Australia, others are appealing deportation following criminal offences, and others have breached the conditions of their visa or have entered illegally and are under investigation.

The Chair of the Committee, Michael Danby, said, "A humanitarian approach that treats all people with dignity needs to be integrated into Australian policy on overseas arrivals".

He added, "This inquiry is an important initiative in setting Australia's immigration detention policies and exploring options for the future. I encourage all those who have had experience of immigration detention to contribute to this inquiry and help shape both a fairer and more efficient system".

In April this year the Committee visited the Villawood Detention Centre in Sydney and spoke to staff, advocacy workers and ex-detainees. Concerns were raised regarding the length of time in detention, the application and appeal processes and the physical environment of the centres. The Committee is now setting out to develop a blueprint for Australia's immigration detention policy and centres.

The Minister for Immigration, Senator Chris Evans, has asked the Committee to inquire into and report on issues such as:

- the criteria for detention and length of time in detention
- the criteria for release from detention
- accountability and transparency in immigration detention processes
- the infrastructure and physical environments of detention centres
- types of detention (including residential housing and community detention) and other alternatives, and
- the administration of the services available to those in detention.

**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Michael Danby MP, on (03) 9534 8126 (electorate office).

**For background information**, including the full terms of reference, please visit the inquiry website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/reports.htm> or contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4560 or [jscm@aph.gov.au](mailto:jscm@aph.gov.au).