

Conclusions

- 8.1 The Committee's program of visits to Immigration Detention Centres (IDCs) was in part a response to public interest and concern in conditions at those centres. This concern has resulted in an amount of media coverage and reports by several different organisations and individuals.
- 8.2 It should be noted that the Committee first expressed an interest in examining human rights conditions and treatment at the IDCs in March 2000.
- 8.3 The Committee notes DIMA's efforts to reduce processing times since large numbers of unlawful arrivals refugees began landing in late-1999. Additional centres are to be built and others are to be refurbished over the next few years. The closure of the centre at Curtin is planned.¹
- 8.4 The Committee notes that the numbers of illegal arrivals may not decline. While it does not believe that people smugglers should be tolerated, neither does the Committee believe that genuine refugees should be discouraged in their wish to settle here. There is a delicate balance to be achieved, and the Committee hopes that it has been able to assist in the process of changing the emphasis in the treatment of asylum seekers in the centres.
- 8.5 This Report has demonstrated the Committee's belief that there are a number of concerns about the human rights conditions of detainees in the centres. There is also a wide range of community concerns about these matters.
- 8.6 In earlier chapters, the Committee has made a number of recommendations in areas where it thinks that the conditions of detainees could be improved, particularly in the short-term. These

1 See paragraphs 2.55-2.62.

recommendations will involve considerable effort on DIMA's part to alter the contractual arrangements with ACM. The Committee believes that these changes are both necessary and worthwhile to satisfy community concerns, and to ensure that Australia's international reputation is not damaged by reports of its treatment of asylum seekers.

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Chairman