



## Detainees in community pose little risk: Immigration Detention Advisory Group

The positive impact of a shift to community and alternative forms of immigration detention will be subject of discussions at a public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration tomorrow. The hearing is part of the Committee's inquiry into immigration detention future policies and practices in Australia.

At the public hearing on Wednesday 3 September, the Immigration Detention Advisory Group (IDAG) is expected to describe the benefits of community and alternative forms of detention. They also note that there is a perception that 'releasing people from detention into the Australian community creates significant risks for the community at large'. However, IDAG state that, 'the facts indicate otherwise'.

The advisory group says it knows of no case in which a person has escaped from a detention centre or has absconded from other forms of detention and created any major problems for the community at large.

Committee Chair Michael Danby has said he is keen to hear about IDAG's response to immigration reforms that will expand community detention options.

'IDAG has unfettered access to immigration detention centres and its visits to the centres are very important', he said.

'Although the reforms will further reduce the number of people in detention centres, there will still be a core group of detainees held in detention and it's important that IDAG continues to advocate for their conditions'.

'On the other hand, given the increased numbers of clients in the community, the Committee will be interested to hear from IDAG about how they see their scrutiny and oversight role evolving'.

'IDAG's evidence will help us to formulate our views for the inquiry report', he said.

IDAG was created in 2001 by Ministerial appointment. The group's submission, along with over one hundred others received by the Committee, is available on the inquiry website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/detention/index.htm>.

The public hearing will take place at 12.00 noon tomorrow (Wednesday 3 September) in Committee Room 1R3. The hearing will also be audiocast on parliamentary channels.

IDAG will be represented by the Hon John Hodges, Chairperson, and Air Marshal Ray Funnell AC (Rtd).

The Committee Chair, Michael Danby MP, is available for comment on (02) 6277 4520.

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