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Submission to Joint Standing Committee on Migration

Submitted by Marie Standen, Chairperson Blue Mountains refugee Support Group

Dear Hon. Michael Danby ,

The Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group has been working with refugees in detention and those released into the community, since December, 2001. The following are some of the concerns our experience has lead us to believe need serious attention.

- * Mandatory detention be abolished.
- * The longer a detainee spends in detention the more likelihood the detainee will suffer from depression.
- * Provide detainees greater access to English classes and stimulating activities.
- * More cost effective and humane ways of keeping track of refugees in the community be substituted for detention.
- * Review the resettlement of refugees and their families released into the community. They need greater assistance in finding suitable housing, employment, English classes, education and cultural support.
- * Refugees released on Bridging E visas should receive Medicare, work rights and/or financial and medical support.
- * The Government prepare **now** for the inevitable increase in the arrival of Climate Change Refugees from low lying island in the Pacific. Resettlement of these people will require much preparation for the refugees and the established community to prevent economic, cultural and political upheaval.
- * The Excision Zone should be abandoned as it sends a negative message to the world community.
- * The Christmas Island Detention centre which was built at enormous cost and continues to be a drain on the taxpayer be remodelled and used for some worthwhile purpose.
- * The policy of charging detainees for their accommodation while in detention be abandoned. It is a thinly disguised means of preventing them from re-entering the country should they leave Australia to visit family or on business.
- * Review the '46 day rule' which is so often misunderstood.

Marie Standen

Chairperson Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group