

Submission No. 4

Date Received

**SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO IMMIGRATION DETENTION  
IN AUSTRALIA**

**RECEIVED**  
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General comments:

Since the low point of the Tampa crisis in 2001, I have taken great interest in the ongoing debate about immigration detention. I have written letters to the relevant Minister from time to time but of course, the only response is a departmental blurb on the current government policy. At least, since the Rudd government came to power some of the worst aspects of Australia's Immigration, Refugee and Asylum Seeker policy have been rolled back eg the "Pacific Solution".

BY: MIG

Length of time in detention:

Refugees and Asylum Seekers should be kept in detention for a month at most. I am sure that the Department of Immigration will have figures to show that, of the numbers of detainees released into the community, the problems caused by those released detainees is minimal.

Release after checks:

I doubt if anyone can sensibly argue that Australia should not choose what its policy on Refugees and Asylum Seekers is going to be. Health and security checks are sensible policy. However, there is no reason why people should be kept in detention for longer than just a few weeks at the most. If checks about the status of a person are going to continue for longer than that, the person should be allowed to go into the community. A health check can be done within a few days and preliminary checks about security should not take longer than a few weeks. Australia is crying out for workers in all areas and it is crazy to stop people who could make a real contribution, both to Australia and to their own welfare and upkeep should be forbidden from working. One only has to look at the migration experience in Australia especially since World war II, to appreciate the immeasurable positive contribution of migrants to Australia's society. I doubt if the experience of permitting the Vietnamese boat people to become citizens and fully partake in our society has had any other than minor problems. Those people are integrated and Australia has benefited from their contribution.

The main argument for a more humane policy is that, except for our indigenous people, we are all boat people. We have all come from somewhere else. How can it possibly be a problem to release people who have escaped war, torture or other horrors to find their way here. Any one of them will work his guts out to make a better life for himself and his family and this can only be to the advantage of Australia. The courts are not exactly groaning from the weight of cases against asylum seekers and refugees for transgressions against Australia's laws. The risks of a few causing problems are hugely outweighed by the positive outcomes for those that are released.

Keeping people in detention indefinitely causes mental and psychological problems which would be greatly reduced if people were allowed out to work and become like citizens. I rather think that the Australian youths in the Cronulla riots were not as responsible citizens as most of those we are trying to keep behind bars.

Other terms of reference:

I am not equipped to make sensible comments on the other terms of reference.

Robin M Gibson