



**Joint Standing
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Media Release

COMMITTEE REPORTS ON DETENTION CENTRES

A report from the Joint Standing Committee on Migration on Australian detention centres, entitled "Not the Hilton" was tabled in Parliament today.

"The Committee examined the infrastructure and services at all of Australia's nine detention facilities during late 1999 and early 2000" the Chair of the Committee, Chris Gallus said.

"We saw the centres at a time when unauthorised arrivals by sea were approaching the record number of 4174 in 1999/2000."

The report is critical of the lack of facilities at Christmas Island, which puts pressure on island resources, and results in the unsatisfactory accommodation of detained asylum seekers waiting for transport to the mainland.

The report is also critical of the facilities at Willie Creek, where fishermen apprehended fishing illegally in Australian waters are detained by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority using the powers of the Migration Act.

The Committee visited the newly established detention centres at Curtin and Woomera shortly after they had commenced receiving detainees.

"While the Committee was impressed with the way in which the centres had been able to handle the large influx of detainees, the Committee noted that, at the time of its visit, the on-site medical facilities required upgrading at both centres."

Further, the Committee expressed concern that the lack of subdivisions in the centres, particularly at Curtin, could limit the ability of the staff at Curtin to keep order in tense situations.

Overall the Committee concluded that "The detention administration is appropriate and professional; the facilities provided for the detainees are adequate; and the cultural sensitivities of the detainees are being accommodated."

"The Committee will to continue to monitor and inspect detention centres," Mrs Gallus said.

For further information/comment please ring Chris Gallus on 02 6277 4840 or 0417 849 804