

Dear Committee,

I'm writing to you to express my concerns about our current state of mandatory detention which in my view is expensive, ineffective and inhumane. Here are the four standards that I believe should define our policies for treating asylum seekers:

1. Children should never be held in confinement where they can't play or move freely. Other than in exceptional circumstances, and in line with the best interests of the child, families should be able to stay together – children should not be separated from family members.

2. Immigration detention should:

- be used as a last resort
- for the shortest practicable time
- be subject to independent (administrative or judicial) review
- be subject to independent monitoring and oversight
- only be used for the specific purposes of managing genuine risk.

3. Alternatives to immigration detention should be developed, adopted and implemented ASAP.

4. All members of Parliament should commit to improving the public debate and refrain from political point scoring about asylum seeker issues, acknowledging that it is not illegal to seek asylum and that Australia has freely entered into the international obligations contained in the 1951 Refugee Convention and other international instruments.

Thank you for your time.