

Would you please accept a late but short submission? I am a volunteer worker with people with Temporary Protection Visas and had a rest from work last week so did not receive information about the inquiry. I want to comment briefly on only a, c and d of the terms of reference.

A) Delays, some now up to 1 year. in decision making is leading to immense mental trauma for those affected.. The length of time and uncertainty is increasing the incidence of mental illness and family problems.

A related problem is the continued punishment of people on TPVs - particularly on Visas 447 and 451. As one refugee said to me "First they put us in detention to make us mad, then they give us a TPV to keep us mad" and his friend added "In the end we will be no good to our selves, our families or the country where we end up". An indictment indeed.

C) Health care in the detention centres is totally inadequate; I am aware of 2 young men who have sustained broken bones which have failed to heal. One of these men has an ulna that can be moved independently in his arm. This fracture occurred on Manus Island and he spent another three years on Nauru before being released in Australia.

Detainees often exhibit severe symptoms of mental illness after release; particularly people leaving Baxter.

But I believe that all people who have spent lengthy periods in detention have some degree of mental health problem.

D) Outsourcing has been a disaster. Organisations are not accountable to the Minister, the Department or anyone else. Too many staff are ex-prison officers and assume too much power over the detainees. The outstanding problem is placing people in solitary confinement for perceived misbehaviour without charge or legal authority to do so. The Department has built these detention centres so there was obviously a decision made at ministerial or departmental level that the companies conducting the centres would have a use for solitary confinement. How could this be?

Thank you for accepting this submission - I believe that the only thing that will rectify the situation for refugees is to do away with the TPV system.

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