

## **Submission on Nauru to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee 'Inquiry into the administration and operation of the Migration Act 1958'**

I wish to address the issue of the remaining asylum seekers on Nauru – thirty two are still in limbo awaiting a decision from the Australian Government as to their future.

**I am more than willing to appear before the committee to supplement this brief submission by answering any questions the Committee may wish to put to me.**

I had the good fortune to visit Nauru and the asylum seekers there on two occasions this year – in May and again in June.

I was there to witness the combined joy and sadness of the departure of some of the people I had long corresponded with when they were finally granted visas to enter Australia. I have been in contact with Mrs Marion Le, and her Office, who has been working on the reviews of each of the people accepted into Australia.

My concern is with those who remain on Nauru.

Although the Minister has stated publicly that new information presented on people's cases is being thoroughly examined, we have not seen much evidence of this in recent weeks:

**'The department is thoroughly examining all information received from Ms Marion Le on individual asylum seeker cases'** – letter from Senator Amanda Vanstone, Minister for Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs to Tony Windsor MP, May 2005

During the Senate Estimates in May this year Mr Robert Illingworth, DIMIA, also said:

**We are receiving and obtaining information constantly from a wide range of sources in relation to essentially all of the case loads that we are responsible for. The case load on Nauru is no different from that. We have been receiving and obtaining information in relation to people who are not in the Afghan case load. We expect we will be receiving more information, which is being provided to us by an advocate supporting some of those people. We have received some information—a considerable amount of information—from that source already. We are looking closely at what we have received and we will look closely at the material which we expect will be coming shortly but we are not ruling any particular case out.**

This year we have seen 22 people released from detention on Nauru. While this has been a very welcome development, there are still 32 people who remain uncertain of their future. When is the department planning to assess and act on the information received for many of these people?

At a cost of thousands of dollars per person each day, this is obviously not a sane policy. See [http://www.thecouriermail.news.com.au/common/story\\_page/0,5936,16153528%255E953,00.html](http://www.thecouriermail.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5936,16153528%255E953,00.html).

Now that the families have been released it seems that there is less political will to move quickly on the information presented on behalf of these males.

Australia should not be indefinitely detaining people of any age or gender.

It is coming up to 4 years that these people have been without their freedom - this is simply not acceptable. Solutions must be found for everyone now. We have seen that the Minister is capable of making common

sense decisions - there is no reason why she cannot make one right now and grant visas to all those remaining on Nauru.

At the moment the remaining 32 people feel abandoned and forgotten by Australia.

The new MOU between Australia and Nauru has still not been finalised - this should happen in the next week or two. The fourth anniversary of the Tampa rescue is also coming up on 26 August. It is my sincere hope that by that date all those remaining on Nauru will have been granted visas to enter Australia.

Yours sincerely

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