

Below is my brief submission to the INQUIRY INTO THE ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION OF THE MIGRATION ACT 1958:

I am a volunteer counsellor at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) in North Melbourne and write to express my disgust at the process of granting permanent residency to asylum seekers. The clients I see have a genuine fear of persecution, clients often have had their families tortured and murdered in front of them and have the accompanying anxiety and trauma associated with such experiences.

Their mental health problems are exacerbated by the length of the determination process for permanent residency and the conditions under which they have to survive especially given the restrictions of Bridging Visa E which gives them no work rights and no medicare. Most of these asylum seekers speak English and have skills to offer the Australian community.

Needless to say the unnecessary practice of mandatory detention compounds the problems the asylum seekers are facing.

I plead with the committee to review the application of the migration act and for the government to return to a more benign immigration regime such as that under the Fraser government which saw many Vietnamese refugees settled here and reunited with their families.

Yours sincerely
Hoa Pham