

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal & Constitutional Committee  
Dept of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra Act 2600

25/5/2006

**Inquiry into Provisions of the Migration Amendment  
(Designated Unauthorised Arrivals Bill 2006)**

Dear Senate Committee Members,

I am writing because I was so disappointed to hear that the Federal Government is planning to take a backward step regarding asylum seekers to Australia.

The changes are following the granting of protection in some form at least to 42 of the asylum seekers from Papua seeking protection from persecution in their homeland. This was a welcome display of this country's recognition of the refugee convention and our obligations to those suffering persecution on our doorstep. This was a more truly Australian value than has been evident in the recent past. That the 43<sup>rd</sup> Papuan was not accorded the same treatment was shameful.

However I now hear that again asylum seekers will be removed from Australia and sent to offshore centres – to be held there until some 3<sup>rd</sup> country provides refuge!

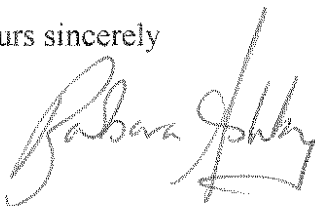
I am also deeply concerned by the proposal that the Australian navy may forcibly return boats of asylum seekers to the very places they fled. What would happen to them can be imagined.

The harm that follows from these policies has already been seen. I believe that most Australians do have values – values which promote caring about human rights of those fleeing persecution. Most of Australia's population over the last 200 years has come from other countries – many of us have been refugees – these human values of providing a safe place to live are deeply rooted in our psyche, the manipulation of media notwithstanding.

International human rights law sets a standard of values for the world to uphold. These changes to the laws will be in breach of those laws. Children will again be in detention – so will innocent men and women. Offshore detainees will be without access to the Refugee Review Tribunal.

Please reconsider this inhumane legislation.

Yours sincerely



Barbara Ashby