

Dear Committee Members

I have grave concerns about the harm that mandatory detention does to those in detention. I also believe that Australia's system of mandatory detention is expensive and ineffective and request that alternatives to mandatory detention should be developed and adopted.

Policies for our treatment of asylum seekers should reflect that children should not be held in detention. Other than in exceptional circumstances, and in the best interests of the child, children should remain with family members.

Immigration detention should be used as a last resort, for the shortest possible time and only be used to manage genuine risk. The system of detention should be subject to independent review, monitoring and oversight.

Public debate around issues of immigration should reflect that it is not illegal to seek asylum and that Australia has entered freely into international obligations in relation to refugees. Politicians have an important leadership role to play in public debate and I would submit that their statements should accurately reflect these facts.