

WORLDWIDE REACH.
HUMAN TOUCH.



7 April 2015

Ms Sophie Dunstone
Committee Secretary
Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee

Sent via email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Dunstone

Inquiry into the Migration Amendment (Maintaining Good order of Immigration Detention Centres) Bill 2015

Thank you for the invitation to make this submission to the Committee in relation to the Inquiry into the Migration Amendment (Maintaining Good order of Immigration Detention Centres) Bill 2015.

International Health and Medical Services (IHMS) is a fully owned subsidiary of International SOS (Australasia) Pty Ltd. IHMS has been delivering health care to people in Immigration Detention since 2003. We currently provide integrated health care services to 12 onshore facilities, the two Regional Processing Centres and to people in Community Detention.

IHMS currently has 312 staff of which 260 are based on site at these facilities.

IHMS acknowledges the increase in violent and aggressive behaviour within some of the immigration detention facilities and supports the amendments to the Bill that provide authorised officers with the resources to continue to manage the safety, security and peace of the immigration detention facilities.

Whereas the vast majority of acts of violence witnessed by and involving IHMS staff have been in the form of "acting out", that is damaging furniture, walls or doors, or throwing objects (generally not in the direction of staff), there have been some isolated incidents of inappropriate touching and physical aggression which have required the application of restraint. There have also been more serious instances of aggression including threats of violence against IHMS staff. There have been a small number of isolated instances of serious attempts to harm IHMS staff in which individuals have had to be physically restrained by security staff.

In the majority of cases the common law right of self-defence has been sufficient to meet our needs. This is particularly so when matched with consistent application of risk management procedures, good security support and disciplinary procedures that apply consequences to individuals who act inappropriately. Given however the potential for serious repercussions should security personnel not have the capability to restrain an individual harming or threatening to harm himself or another person, IHMS supports the provision of resources to authorised officers to enable them to manage the safety, security and peace of the immigration detention facilities.

Yours sincerely

Michael Gardner
Regional Managing Director