

As members of Montmorency Asylum Seekers Support Group (MASSG), we are writing to oppose the forthcoming Migration (Validation of Port Appointment) Bill 2018.

The Federal Circuit Court found that Minister Phillip Ruddock illegally excised Ashmore Reef from Australia's Migration Zone from 2002 until 2012. It found that anyone arriving at Ashmore Reef during this period was arriving in Australia and had the right to claim asylum here, but this opportunity was denied to them.

The Federal Government's recent move to correct its own error by retrospectively legitimising Ruddock's action would place 1600 people in an intolerable situation, preventing them from becoming permanent residents and instead forcing them into the already overloaded and under-resourced Fast Track process.

We believe there is no justification for this action which, if successful, will impact severely on the welfare of many innocent and vulnerable people.

The Senate's Standing Scrutiny of Bills Committee has profound misgivings about such retrospective legislation, which is attempting to undermine the rule of law and which displays disrespect for the Federal Circuit Court.

Only recently, both major political parties have confirmed their commitment to a multicultural Australia, rejecting discrimination on grounds of ethnic background, religion etc. This bill goes against that commitment, instead removing the basic human rights of so many on which Australia's democracy is based. We urge the Senate to stand up for essential respect for human rights and non-discrimination.

We urge you to vote against this proposed Bill which has serious implications for people and for the status of our democracy.

Thank you,

Pam Rowley

for MASSG- Montmorency Asylum Seekers Support Group