

Social Responsibilities Committee



22 November 2024

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

The Social Responsibilities Committee
Anglican Church Southern Queensland (Diocese of Brisbane)

Dear Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee,

RE: Migration Amendment Bill 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the Migration Amendment Bill 2024 (the Bill).

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland through its parishes, schools and social services work with, assist and care for, and advocate for the humane treatment of migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum. As followers of Jesus we believe all people are made in the image of God, and therefore deserve to be treated with dignity and compassion.

We recommend the Bill not be passed.

Ever since the Keating Government introduced the idea of indefinite detention for refugees, the Australian Government has carried out a program of persecution and demonisation of people seeking asylum and refugees. This Bill reminds us that successive Governments have long forgotten that those subject to these policies are vulnerable people, often deeply traumatised.

If passed this Bill will allow the Government to deport people to third countries where they may be detained or deported back to countries where they are at risk of persecution and even death. This is absolutely unconscionable conduct.

Many of our parishioners have supported people transferred to Australia from Nauru or PNG who hold bridging visas. Once their bridging visa expires, the government could use this proposed Bill to deport them. Since their protection claims weren't assessed in Australia, they're not protected under the proposed Bill's exceptions for people with protection findings, putting them at serious risk.

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Moreover, there are people in our Diocesan community who have been living in Australia for many years who would be exposed to deportation once the Minister overturns their 'protection finding'. These could include our friends and neighbours who have Australian citizen family members. This proposed Bill risks putting people at harm and tearing families apart.

Instead of subjecting refugees and people seeking asylum to further unnecessary punishment, as this Bill would, the Government should be doing more to support these people at a time when they are seeking to rebuild their lives, and increase their contribution to our society. We recommend the Bill not be passed.

We welcome any questions from the Committee and would be open to a conversation to clarify our concerns anytime.

Yours Sincerely

The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt
Chair
Social Responsibilities Committee
Anglican Church Southern Queensland