

Subject: Re proposed amendments to Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation
Date: Saturday, 25 October 2014 8:28:03 AM

Dear Members of the Senate Committee,

I ask you on all sides of politics to consider your stance in regard to proposed abhorrent amendments that undermine justice and governance.

The proposed amendments to the Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Bill 2014 are further steps on the slippery slope of excessive powers and abuse of those powers.

Please represent integrity and decency and say no the barrage of attempts by the current government to remove needed scrutiny and transparency. In opposition their voices were strident about 'the public interest' but we hear this no more. Now secrecy and excessive powers appear to be required to be able to govern.

Our justice system must not be compromised, especially by elected representatives who are supposed to understand that good governance is not about unfettered powers

I ask you to raise your voice, acting with integrity and defending important Australian values and legislation

I ask you to look into the faces of asylum seekers and recognise their rights and their needs. We can and should honour our obligations under the Refugee Convention. The 'wicked problem' of refugees will not go away when we turn away people. We are either part of a global solution or just adding to the burden of other countries, poorer countries in trying to meet the real and genuine needs of displaced people. There is no one simple solution but it is in difficult situations our character and values are shown.

Access to legal advice and a proper opportunity to put the most important case of their lives forward should not even be open to debate! What if it were your family?

TPV's as envisaged by this government are a form of torture and this has been well documented.

Escaping war, torture and persecution; leaving family members behind; leaving one's home, possessions, profession and community - these are deeply traumatised individuals already. To then find themselves detained and taunted by the minister Scott Morrison with videos reminding them they will never call Australia home, sends these people into a spiral of despair, self-harm and often to suicide attempts.

We can do a lot better as a nation. We can have on-shore processing at a fraction of the cost of our off-shore detention centres. We can still prevent queue-jumping in doing this and provide a disincentive for people jumping on boats, but we will always have boat people! My family were boat people fleeing the potato famine in Ireland. We, like many of your families, have helped build this nation. That's how we should be thinking about these refugees. An economic force necessary given our ageing population!

This is not a government that needs further powers, it is already abusing those it has.

I ask you to reject wholly and fully the proposed amendments

Yours sincerely

Dianne Francois