

It is not my wish to guess at the motivation or state of mind of those seeking the repeal of the Medevac legislation. In the face of evidence however that the passage of the legislation has not heralded the events about which we were warned, rational people are left wondering about any genuine reasons for seeking to abolish the Medevac legislation.

Late in 2018 when Kerry Phelp and the cross bench were working to have the legislation passed, we were warned by Mr Dutton that passage of the legislation would bring boatloads of asylum seekers to Australia's shores; and that Australians would find it hard to get beds in Australia's hospitals because they would be filled by refugees from Manus Island and Nauru.

Even Minister Dutton himself must surely recognise that he overstepped with these prognostications. None of his dire warnings has come to pass.

Since Mr Dutton's dire warnings have been revealed as lacking credibility, and in view of his own department's history of fighting in court to stop applications from refugees in the offshore detention centres in need of medical/ health treatment in hospitals on the mainland, it is most regrettable to find oneself doing the very thing one wishes to avoid.

Put simply, we have to ask the question: in the face of clear evidence that the legislation in operation has not brought about their devastating predictions, what could possibly motivate a person - much less a government - to seek to abolish this legislation?

Put even more simply, the legislation is working just fine, Mr Dutton. You as minister still have the final say; as minister, you can refuse a refugee's application on grounds of concern about character or national security.

The minister's own history of preferential treatment for whites - the "au pair" affair alongside his expressed concerns for white farmers in southern Africa - raises further questions about his state of mind.

In these circumstances, I write asking the Committee to reflect the best impulses of the Australian community as a people who still believe in justice, equality and a fair go by rejecting calls for the abolition of the Medevac legislation.