

Subject: The Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Bill 2014
Date: Thursday, 23 October 2014 7:50:03 PM

Dear Committee Secretary,

I write in regard to The Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Bill 2014 currently before Parliament. I have written to Senators asking them to oppose this in the Senate.

I have ongoing concerns about the reintroduction of TPVs and communicated this to those in government. In the recent year I have actually met asylum seekers, including those who have come by boat and friends of those who have ended their lives rather than live in indefinite statelessness unable to reunite with their families.

My research on the 'politics' of asylum seekers is revealing a disregard of UN Refugee Convention, and this disregard is evident in the proposed changes to the Migration Act.

The actions of the current government indicates that international legislation interferes with the politics of asylum seeking; rather than intelligent long term proactive and comprehensive strategy, the proposed amendment is full of political agenda.

I strongly believe that recognition of international legislation (as a reflection of lessons of history and global relations) will enable Australia in shaping policies associated with foreign affairs, including a response to the global refugee crisis and addressing the push factors for those who seek asylum and the arrival of asylum seekers on our shores.

I believe that the High Court has an important role in grappling with international and national legislation and shaping policy; their involvement protects our nation from agenda informed by politics rather than policy. I am concerned should any government or minister have unchecked power, and believe the objectivity of international legislation and High Court has protective features for our nation's future and our nation's relationships with other countries in our region.

I have come to believe that the language adopted by a government reflects whether they have a policy or are playing politics. The current government's insistence on calling people who seek asylum "illegal" is offensive, and exemplifies their utter disregard for both history and international law let alone the people currently displaced for political and environmental reasons. The LNP is playing politics with those who seek asylum. I therefore have implored the Senators to oppose the proposal to change the definition of 'refugee' - we can do better.

Yours sincerely,

Jo Merrick