

To the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Immigration Detention Network,

I wish to provide a submission in relation to Australia's Immigration Detention Network. I've never provided a submission such as this on any aspect of Australian government policy, but feel very strongly that this is something I must put forward my opinion on.

The way we treat asylum seekers makes me cringe. We're a lucky country and a country full of lucky people. I feel lucky to have been born in such a wealthy country. For most of my younger years I lived it what some, perhaps most born in Australia, would call poverty. But I was lucky enough to have been born in Australia and I've had the chance to make a good, successful, and respectable life through the opportunities that Australia has given me.

We aren't extending a fraction of those opportunities to asylum seekers, even though we as a country have signed conventions that say we will. These people have been through some of the toughest conditions on the planet and we aren't helping them. I find myself shaking my head as I write that. How can that be for a country such as ours? We're a good country with good people in it. We try to do what's right, but in this particular area we aren't even coming close.

With reference to the terms of reference of the committee, I'd like to reiterate some points raised by other organisations such as A Just Australia and the Refugee Council. I'm not a member of either of these groups and I'm not particularly politically active, but their opinion and their views just make sense and I support the following wholeheartedly, and request that the committee consider these points carefully.

1(a) Reforms needed to the current immigration detention network in Australia

- End the indefinite nature of detention. Why are we spending so much on long detention when we could spend money on creating jobs for Australians to undertake speedy health, security and identity checks?
- Any detention over 30 days should be reviewed and decided upon by independent judicial review.
- Ensure children and their families are removed from detention as promptly as practicable.
- End remote detention. If people are moved through centres much quicker there will not be a need for more and more centres. Access to community groups, support and appropriate care is far more likely in and around our capital cities.

1(g) The impact, effectiveness and cost of mandatory detention

- Mental health impacts of detention are well documented. 5 suicides in around 6 months, self harm, hunger strikes, people on suicide watch, isolation - none of this is effective.
- The Minister himself has said that detention is a management tool not a deterrent. (Chris Bowen, [The Age 10 Feb 2011](#))
- In the 2011-12 budget \$800 million has been allocated to detention costs, a tripling in just two years.

- Mandatory detention is costly and not effective. Speedy processing and a more humane approach will provide a better way.

Well, that's about all I've got. This is perhaps not the most professional or important submission you'll receive, but it is a heartfelt plea to change what I consider one of the worst human rights moments in Australia's history. We have an opportunity with your committee to make sure we as the Australian people do a better job in relation to asylum seekers in the future and I ask that you do everything you can to take that opportunity and restore Australia back to a country that can once again be considered humane and just.

Sincerely,

Chris Quin