

21 December 2005

Senator the Hon Paul Calvert
President of the Senate
Suite SG.40
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**Interim Report on the inquiry into
the administration and operation of the *Migration Act 1958* (Cth)**

Pursuant to Senate Standing Order 38(7), I present to you an interim report of the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee on the inquiry into the administration and operation of the *Migration Act 1958* (Cth).

On 21 June 2005, the Senate referred the following terms of reference to the Committee for inquiry and report by 8 November 2005:

- (a) the administration and operation of the *Migration Act 1958*, its regulations and guidelines by the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, with particular reference to the processing and assessment of visa applications, migration detention and the deportation of people from Australia;
- (b) the activities and involvement of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and any other government agencies in processes surrounding the deportation of people from Australia;
- (c) the adequacy of healthcare, including mental healthcare, and other services and assistance provided to people in immigration detention;
- (d) the outsourcing of management and service provision at immigration detention centres; and
- (e) any related matters.

On 6 October 2005 the Senate agreed to extend the reporting date to 1 December 2005. The Senate subsequently agreed to further extend the reporting date to 21 December 2005.

The Committee has received submissions from over 230 organisations and individuals. Public hearings were held in Adelaide on 26 September 2005, Melbourne on 27 September 2005, Sydney on 28 September 2005 and 29 September 2005, and Canberra on 7 October 2005, 11 October 2005 and 8 November 2005. A significant

number of questions asked by Senators at these hearings were placed or taken on notice by witnesses, particularly government witnesses. Answers to some questions have only recently been received.

In view of the significant public interest in this inquiry and the committee's need to thoroughly consider the evidence it has received and to finalise its recommendations on a wide range of complex issues, the Committee will seek to table its report on the first sitting day in 2006. This will ensure that Parliament receives an effective advisory report.

Senator Trish Crossin
Chair