

UNAA PEOPLES COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIAN DETENTION PRACTICES

UNAA is gathering information about Australian detention practices, and its Peoples' Commission of Inquiry will present its interim report on Australia's detention policy to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva during March and April this year. It will provide important background information prior to the inspection of Woomera by Mary Robinson's envoy.

Over the past twelve months there have been repeated calls for independent assessment of conditions within detention centres and for judicial review or a Royal Commission to open up scrutiny of detention policy. In the absence of these official mechanisms the Peoples Commission will rely on those people living, working or visiting detention centres to provide important insight into the need for policy reform.

Anecdotal reporting of major disturbances, deaths and attempted suicide, child abuse and the overall punitive environment of Australia's detention centres indicates that efforts must be made to compile a comprehensive account of life within detention. Clearly without an official inquiry this will not be an easy task, but the Peoples Commission is an interim measure to try to collect personal stories which reflect individual experience. UNAA will continue its advocacy for a Royal Commission.

It is hoped that the Peoples Commission will encourage detainees, former detainees and families, detention staff, official visitors, legal advisers and media to be involved in recording information which could be used to develop an alternative approach to mandatory detention of all asylum seekers.

The Peoples Commission invites comment on:

- **Living Conditions, Privacy, Psychological Impact**

- **Medical Facilities, Education and Recreation Facilities, Counselling**

- **Management Practices, Staff Training, Cultural Awareness**

- **Access to Information, Access to Legal Advice, Appeals Process**

- **Special Needs of Children, Special Needs of Women**

- **Depression, Violence, Punishment, Suicide**

- **Release into the Community, Work Rights, Temporary Protection Visas**

- **Deportation Procedures**

Please consider contributing to this inquiry by completing this form or emailing your comments.

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