



83527151

Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Immigration Department

**Attn Ctte Secretary Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee Fax 02 6277 5794
Dept. Of the Senate, Parliament House, Canberra. ACT 2600 Australia.**

From E Leta Padman, (Murray Bridge Citizen of the Year 2004.)

SUBMISSION

As a volunteer tutor and supporter of Afghani asylum seekers and refugees in Murray Bridge South Australia in the past 3 years and 4 months, I have recorded the stories of many Hazaras. In their culture it is the custom for a young bride to be brought to the family home where the son's mother is the honoured matriarch. Usually the brides were teenagers and since the forced escapes of their husbands, have supported and been supported by, their mothers-in-law. It was always the duty of the eldest son to care for his parents in their old age as they remained in the ancestral home.

Now many of the mothers are widowed and have fled with their daughters-in-law and grandchildren into neighbouring Pakistan, at great risk to their lives. Without male escorts they could have been robbed, raped or shot.

According to DIMIA directions, a man can apply for his wife and children to join him, but his mother may not. How can a loving and dutiful son abandon his mother? If they, the mothers were allowed to come with other family members, they could care for the younger children while their mothers could possibly find work, maybe in places like the Mushroom and flower farms at Murray Bridge or as Aides in the Nursing Homes.

I urge that DIMIA urgently widen their definition of family in their application process to at least include the mother as well as the wife and children of the refugee men.

E. Leta Padman

9/8/05