

Dear Madam/Sir

I write this public submission to the Senate Inquiry into DIMIA as I have been concerned with the Refugee Policy adopted by DIMIA in the recent years. I am a PhD student at the Swinburne University in Hawthorn, Victoria. I have been granted a scholarship since 2003 and a student visa for 3 years. I worked as a full time civic servant in an asylum seekers resource centre in Trieste, in Italy, from November 2002 until April 2003. I have been volunteering at the ASRC in Melbourne since March 2004. I have visited detainees at the DIMIA IDC in Maribyrnong since April 2004. I have met several asylum seekers, detained at Maribyrnong. In particular, two Iranian asylum seekers. Both have become friends of mine. Both of them had been detained for many months. In one case, my friend's family was granted a temporary visa, and my friend had felt a deep personal strain, having been forced for many months to interact with his wife and kids only through the very limited IDC facilities. He was finally granted a protection visa. In the other case, my friend had been detained for years and his daughter was deported to Iran. He was finally granted a protection visa. I had frequently visited them, fortnightly, as friends. I have felt myself part of their sorrow as detained asylum seekers, even if their personal struggle as detainees goes beyond what can be described by words. I have seen many times kids trying to play, like kids do, within the very limited spaces of the IDC. I write this submission to ask for a fair and just go for the asylum seekers, to ask for changing the Refugee Policy, abolishing mandatory detention, to ask for relying instead on local, urban or rural, communities in support of the asylum seekers, to ask for secure the human rights they are granted by the international Human Rights Conventions which were ratified from the Parliament.

Sincerely

Agostino Renda
Fitzroy
Victoria