

Dear Senate Committee

I oppose the proposed changes to the Migration Act which will expand the offshore processing regime currently applying to offshore entry persons and transitory persons to include, in addition, all persons arriving at mainland Australia, on the following grounds.

The proposed changes:

1) are an utterly and shamelessly immoral abomination representing a new low in our treatment of those less well off than ourselves and are an affront to the concept of a fair Australia.

2) are almost certain to result in situations where asylum seekers are rendered stateless and forced to languish in detention centres on far flung islands for years. If a person is found to have a genuine fear of persecution, that is a genuine refugee, these laws will mean that the person will not be settled in Australia but rather we will shop them around to third countries. Why would any other country agree to accept refugees who, under international law, we are obligated to accept? (unless we pay that third country millions of dollars, of course)

3) appear to be an almost complete abandonment of Australia's international obligations under the Refugee Convention, thus continuing to affect Australia's previously high standing in the international community and opening us up to increased international criticism, if not calls for sanctions against us (which would, in my opinion, be entirely justified).

4) are a cynical exercise in appeasement of Indonesia as the class of asylum seeker most likely to be disadvantaged by the new policy are West Papuans fleeing persecution by the TNI and other elements of the Indonesian government.

5) will result in almost total offshore processing and consequently will be massively and disproportionately expensive. The new detention centre being constructed on Christmas Island has already cost several hundred million dollars. This is an absolutely disgraceful and profligate waste of taxpayers money - taxpayers who, surveys show, overwhelmingly support the right of the West Papuans to self-determination.

regards

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