



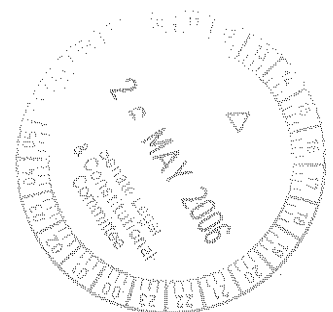
Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

TREASURER MINISTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

Mr Jonathan Curtis
Committee Secretary
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601



Dear Mr Curtis

Thank you for your email of 12 May 2006 regarding a submission to the inquiry into the provisions of the *Migration Amendment (Designated Unauthorised Arrivals) Bill 2006*.

The ACT Government is committed to ensuring the fundamental human rights of all its citizens and those of genuine refugees. The ACT Government's commitment in this regard, as you may be aware, is expressed explicitly in the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

In respect to the inquiry into the *Migration Amendment (Designated Unauthorised Arrivals) Bill 2006*, it would seem that the effect of the proposed amendments by the Australian Government to process future asylum seekers at offshore processing centres would excise the Australian mainland from the migration zone. As a result, I believe the proposed legislation has the potential to undo the many changes made last year following several inquiries that resulted in the positive treatment of asylum seekers today.

The processing of asylum seekers outside the migration zone would diminish accountability for how the Australian Government treats asylum seekers and, consequently, could potentially result in children being placed in detention again, asylum seekers being detained indefinitely, the cessation of case managed mental health care, increased distress and trauma for asylum seekers being relocated from Australia to offshore and back to Australia after being processed and found, as in most cases, to be legitimate refugees.

In this context, I am particularly concerned that the *Migration Amendment (Designated Unauthorised Arrivals) Bill 2006*, will effectively end the oversighting role by the Commonwealth Ombudsman for future asylum seekers.

Apart from the potential human cost of implementing a regime that has limited accountability, it would appear that significant financial costs would be incurred in setting up additional infrastructure offshore.

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601
Phone (02) 6205 0104 Fax (02) 6205 0433 Email stanhope@act.gov.au

The proposed changes under the *Migration Amendment (Designated Unauthorised Arrivals) Bill 2006* are unfair, detract from Australia's international responsibilities to genuine refugees and, the ACT Government believes it to be an unnecessary financial burden on the Australian community.

Thank you for your invitation to submit correspondence to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Stanhope', written in a cursive style.

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister

24 MAY 2006