

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and for conducting this Inquiry.

The Bill proposes to amend the Migration Act 1958 to expand the offshore processing regime currently applying to offshore entry persons and transitory persons to include, in addition, all persons arriving at mainland Australia (meaning other than at an excised offshore place) unlawfully by sea on or after 13 April 2006.

I am making this submission as a concerned Australian Citizen and to voice my opposition to this Bill. I do not believe that anyone that arrives in Australia seeking asylum should be removed from Australia and have their claim processed offshore. I also do not believe that we should be asking other nations to accept people as refugees. I am actually in favour of increasing our refugee intake and changing our policy so as to include people who arrive in Australia by boat without "proper" documentation.

The "unlawful" boat people of the 1970s have since become Australian Citizens. Our society has been served well by an increase in migrants from other nations, many of these have been refugees. It is unfair to discriminate against people claiming refugee status on the basis of how they arrived in Australia.

I also make this submission as a migrant who arrived in Australia from South Africa in 1977. I am forever grateful that the Australian Government accepted my family and I as migrants. I am also incredibly grateful that we were able to fill in the right paperwork and pay our fares to get here. I believe that we were very lucky and I would like to extend that luck to others by not discriminating against them simply because they were not in a situation to fill in the correct forms or get in a queue. I don't believe that people undertake harrowing journeys unless they really want to achieve their goal. I welcome such determined and strong people in Australia.

As a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (The Refugee Convention) I believe that Australia should create refugee policies that are humane and adhere to the Convention. This Bill is not such a policy and I am opposed to it.

Yours sincerely

Daniela Giorgi  
Petersham NSW