



CONFERENCE OF LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES IN NEW SOUTH WALES CLRI (NSW)

ABN: 52 476 362 010
Member of Catholic Church Religious Group

Senator Chris Evans
Minister for Immigration
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Dear Senator Evans,

The Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (NSW) has over three thousand members and, through its social justice committee, works to support and advocate on behalf of poor and disadvantaged people.

Many of our members work with refugees in schools and parishes, at the Asylum Seekers Centre, the House of Welcome, Jesuit Refugee Service and centres run by the Mercy Sisters, the Sisters of St Joseph and others. We welcome the recent changes to Australia's asylum policy. These changes remove some of the cruellest aspects of the previous system. It is with enormous relief that we face the future knowing that desperate people fleeing persecution will no longer be kept behind razor wire indefinitely and that systems and structures will be in place to recognise the rights of people to seek refuge and to be treated with dignity and compassion.

These changes are positive and significant but they must be matched with law reform as we do not want subsequent governments in the position of being able to re-introduce indefinite detention and the incarceration of children. The Christmas Island detention centre, that cross between a maximum security jail and a labour camp, must be abolished, the Excision laws rescinded and all processing of asylum seekers carried out on mainland Australia.

Again congratulations to you and your government on changes which acknowledge the human dignity of each asylum seeker and we look forward to further reforms which will place Australia to the fore in the protection and care of those who seek asylum.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Libby Rogerson ibvm
for CLRI (NSW)
4 August 2008

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