



**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. The organisation, through its social justice committee, works to support and advocate on behalf of poor and disadvantaged people. Many of our members work with immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers and are only too aware of the desperate desire of parents to do the best for their children, something they cannot always do in their own countries.

The recent publicity regarding Dr Moeller and his Down syndrome son raises some very fundamental questions about Australia's Immigration policy in regard to people with illnesses or disabilities. Dr Moeller was granted citizenship because we desperately need rural doctors. Would a tradesman from Sri Lanka receive the same treatment? The policy as it stands is discriminatory and immoral. This is a great disappointment given the extensive reforms your government has made in other areas of immigration law such as temporary protection and the Pacific solution. I had hoped for more from a Labor Government.

Australia is a wealthy, privileged country and if we cannot offer asylum, citizenship and residency to families with a disabled child then there is something radically wrong with our fundamental values and the Australian notion of "a fair go" is rendered obsolete.

I urge you to review our Immigration law in regard to people with disabilities. Australia is, in so many ways, the "lucky country" surely we can take a lead in compassion and generosity when it comes to welcoming people with disabilities.

The members of CLRI (NSW) are only too happy to discuss this with you or your staff members.

Yours sincerely,

Libby Rogerson ibvm
for CLRI (NSW)
5 December 2008

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