

UPDATED REPORT BY THE ASRC ON THE NEW MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION'S Senator Chris Evans 417 decisions as of 4th of May 2008

The injustice continues under an ALP government when it comes to asylum seekers

NUMBER OF DECISIONS MADE

| Decisions Made | Yes | No | % of cases rejected |
|----------------|-----|----|---------------------|
| 42 | 1 | 41 | 97.6** |

FAST FACT

**** Highest rejection rate the ASRC has had from any Minister since the ASRC started in 2001!**

BACKGROUND OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

| Number of People Affected | Number of Countries from |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 61 | 18 |

COUNTRY BACKGROUND OF ASYLUM SEEKERS REJECTED

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------|-----------------|----------|------------|-------|----------|------|---------|---------|
| Sri Lanka | China | Eastern Europe* | Ethiopia | East Timor | India | Pakistan | Iran | Nigeria | Lebanon |
| 30% | 7% | 14% | 2% | 5% | 7% | 14% | 2% | 2% | 2% |

* Eastern Europe (Uzbekistan, Lithuanian, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine)

We also had people from: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Phillipines and Northern Cyprus

FAMILY TIES BACKGROUND OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Married or in a de facto relationship with Australian or have child with Australian | Have a child with an Australian permanent resident/citizen | Have immediate family in Australia | Asylum seekers who have their children with them who have been rejected by the Minister also |
| 10% | 4% | 16% | 23% |

AREAS OF CONCERN RAISED TO MINISTER FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS REJECTED

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Concerns for mental health | Concerns for immediate safety if returned | Concerns for breaking up family (spouse/siblings/parents) |
| 45% | 59% | 16% |

WHAT DO THESE FINDINGS MEAN?

So these findings are based on the first 42 finalised decisions we have received from the Minister. It's still too early to get a complete picture of how the Minister will exercise his power, however it's sadly looking like a change of government may have brought no real change for asylum seekers.

These findings are concerning for the following reasons:

- The short - time span within which these decisions have been received. Despite our urging DIAC for the last 3 years to not send us bulk refusal decisions because they are unmanageable and create a crisis that neither ourselves, other agencies or they can deal with, we had 41 rejections in 5 weeks!

- The refusal of asylum seekers married/defacto to Australians is particularly of concern given the claims of family being so important under this government. We see this as a punitive approach to split up families and in line with the last government's deterrence policy.

- The refusal of asylum seekers who have a child with an Australian, troubles us because it can never be in the best interests of a child to separate them from their parent and is a breach of our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- The refusal of asylum seekers with adult Australian citizen children who if removed have no viable way of being reunited.

- The lack of weight being given in particular to concerns regarding the mental health of asylum seekers who are too traumatised to be returned.

Regards

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CEO

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

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