

Repealing the Medevac laws is tantamount to state-sanctioned torture and is in direct breach of our human rights obligations, said AASW National President Christine Craik. "We were deeply disappointed to learn that despite the overwhelming consensus that the Medevac legislation is working as intended, the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee recommended in its report that the legislation be repealed. "This is an affront to our democratic principles given that most submissions to this inquiry argued that the legislation needs to stay in place. It is now time for the Senate to show compassion and act to secure a policy that provides much needed care." In its submission to this inquiry, the AASW strongly opposed the proposed Migration Amendment 2019 as it will prevent refugees and people seeking asylum from accessing medical treatment and exacerbate their trauma in offshore detention facilities. Ms Craik said, "The Migration Amendment Bill 2019 is another attempt by the Australian government to punish people seeking asylum for fleeing persecution by denying them humane treatment and access to medical care. The indifference this shows to fellow human beings is appalling. "Our members have witnessed the debilitating and traumatising effects of offshore and on-shore processing, and the impact that indefinite detention has on the health and wellbeing of people seeking asylum, including children and families." Social workers have directly experienced the harsh conditions, and have worked with people in detention experiencing significant trauma, sexual and physical assault, abuse, mental ill-health and self-harm. "If people in offshore detention cannot receive the medical treatment they need, they will be at greatly increased risk of increased trauma, which can have devastating impacts including death. "We renew our call for an immediate end to the harsh, cruel or discriminatory policies towards people seeking asylum and refugees and a commitment to respecting their human rights to safety, fair treatment and medical care," Ms Craik said. As a signatory to numerous Conventions and a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Australian government must show global leadership in human rights protection and have policies that reflect the key rights and principles that Australia has committed to uphold. Seeking asylum is a human right.

Contacts

Angela Yin
03 9320 1005
mailto: media@aasw.asn.au