

## Migration Amendment (Prohibiting Items in Immigration Detention) Bill 2020 continues human rights abuses, says AASW

The AASW has called for an end to mandatory detention of asylum seekers in its submission to the Migration Amendment (Prohibiting Items in Immigration Detention Facilities) Bill 2020 [Provisions] inquiry.

AASW National President Christine Craik said, “The amendments in this bill continue a tradition of human rights abuses targeting a vulnerable population, who have a right to seek asylum in Australia, and who by no fault of their own find themselves prevented from living their lives in security and safety in their country of origin.

“This bill proposes increasing the search powers of authorised officers, allowing them to search asylum seekers and their belongings without a warrant, preventing access to SIM cards and other forms of communication with internet-connectivity, treating asylum seekers as if they have broken the law.

“Expanding the powers of officers to conduct searches and being able to do so without a warrant or solid basis will continue the harmful nature of detention. Again, these measures will apply to people who have broken no laws and whose mental health is already at risk because of government policy.”

Ms Craik said seeking asylum in Australia is not illegal, however our practice of placing asylum seekers into mandatory detention is punitive, cruel, and only designed to deter people from coming to Australia.

She said, “These proposed amendments will exacerbate existing breaches of the human rights of people seeking asylum and perpetuate the harm being done to a group of vulnerable people in the name of border security.”

“The Federal Government needs to end the policy of mandatory detention now. It is a measure that does not work, is costly, and causes immeasurable damage to those vulnerable people who have already worked so hard to flee harm.”

Our submission will be made available on the Parliamentary website in due course.

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