

# Chilout Bulletin Flinders University

No. 2 September 2002



Children Out of Detention (Chilout) is a group of parents and citizens opposed to the mandatory detention of children in Australian Immigration Detention Centres (IDCs)

## The Events of August : DIMIA V. the Rule of Law

by Constance Lever-Tracy

August saw an abundance of revelations and legal decisions that exposed the incompetence (at best) and the cruelty and injustice (at worst) of the Department of Immigration (DIMIA) and of its Refugee Review Tribunal. Increasingly the courts have been seeking to challenge their seemingly limitless power over the lives of asylum seeking men, women and children.

### The case of Shayan Bedraie

ChilOut's national organisation celebrated the release at long last, on August 16<sup>th</sup>, after two and a half years in detention, of Saeed Badraie, father of Shayan. They wrote:

It is auspicious that almost to the day that ChilOut started, the whole Badraie family is reunited and free. They were present at our picnic [in Sydney] and seeing them mingling, chatting and laughing with everyone, and Saeed Badraie walking around videoing and asking people "are you happy?" brought tears to many eyes... And young Shayan, the reason for ChilOut's existence, was just like any healthy, happy young boy.

A year ago, the plight of six year old Shayan, traumatised by over a year in detention, refusing to eat, speak or sleep, was revealed by ABC 4Corners. The story touched the hearts of many Australians. Some five thousand messages (the largest number ever) were posted on the ABC web site. Two thirds were in support of the family, saying again and again: 'How can I help? I did not know such

things were being done, by our government, in our name!' Many refugee support organisations, including ChilOut, resulted from this.

The Bedraie's asylum claim had been rejected. But the Badraies appealed to the Full Bench of the Federal Court and won. The court found that the original Tribunal had not assessed evidence that the family's religion was subject to persecution, and ordered them to hear the case again. This time the Tribunal heard expert evidence that as members of the Al-Haqq religion (regarded as an intolerable heresy within Islam or as an illegitimate, rebellious apostasy) the Bedraies could face death in Iran. They had to reverse their previous decision and grant the family Temporary Protection Visas.

I think it now tells us that the Minister was given very poor information in the beginning, and that is because of the flawed assessment system, as judged by the High Court today. All the anguish, all the dreadful things that's happened to them have really happened for no reason. (Jacquie Everitt, lawyer for the family).

### High Court upholds appeals

On 15<sup>th</sup> August the High Court found (by rulings of 7-0 and 5-2) that two appealed visa cases had involved unfair procedures by the Tribunal. Insofar as similar procedures may have been widely used, up to 7600 rejected

applications could now be open to challenge. Adrian Joel, the lawyer who represented the applicants, denied the government claim that at issue was just a technicality. He said he had demonstrated significant injustice and maladministration in the system:

The court held that the law clearly stated that, once the Department of Immigration makes a decision, they have to send the evidence to the appeal board, it's as simple as that... The law clearly stated it has to be in document form, each and every document. Now what actually did take place was an electronic transfer which the court recognised was significantly dissimilar to the evidence that was presented to the Department of Immigration... You may have an extract instead of a full document, or that document, which is in extract form, isn't readily available in its entirety. You might have significant documents which were supportive, that were gone, lost or only in partial form... A lot of substantive, significant material never got - or may never have got - to the tribunal to look at...

#### **Diminishing the rule of law for all of us**

The High Court was dismayed that its future ability to question such cases would be restricted, by a new law passed last September. This decreed that Tribunal decisions were "final and conclusive; must not be challenged, appealed against, reviewed, quashed or called in question in any court and are not subject to prohibition, mandamus, injunction, declaration or certiorari in any court on any account". Judge Wilcox said of this law:

To the extent that a privative clause is effective, it diminishes the rule of law. That is a significant matter. The rule of law is a concept that lies at the heart of our system of government. Judges must allow to stand decisions that are not in accordance with the will of Parliament. In the immigration area, this may have profound consequences for individuals.

By definition, the people most directly affected will be non-citizens. But Australian citizens may also be impacted; as spouses, relatives, friends or employers of non-citizen visa holders or applicants. ...For any one of us, the relevant non-citizen may be very close to home: the woman our son wishes to marry, the father of our daughter's child, a next door neighbour or key employee whose residence visa has been mistakenly cancelled...

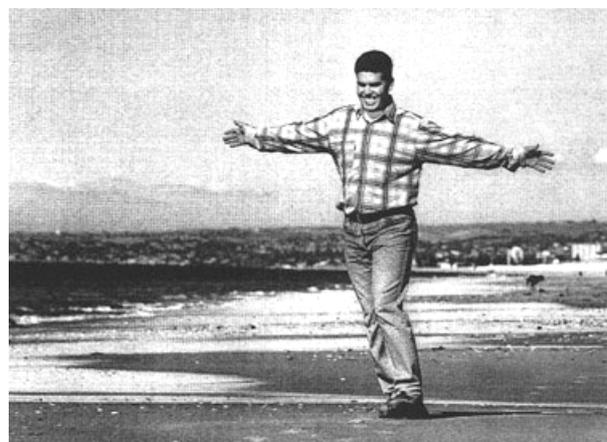
#### **4 years in Detention**

On the 9th of September 1998, Stephen Khan arrived in Australia after fleeing from political persecution in Indian occupied Kashmir. Monday the 9th of September 2002 will mark four years since Stephen arrived in Australia. Four years later Stephen is still in detention... Stephen's mental state has deteriorated significantly since he first arrived here...

Stephen Khan's case is indicative of an inflexible policy which has no mechanisms to deal with asylum seekers whose claims for asylum have been rejected yet cannot be returned to their country of origin. The government's solution at the moment appears to be prolonged and indefinite detention.

#### **The judges fight back!**

In case after case now, judges are finding ways to challenge the autocracy of DIMIA. On August 16th the Federal Court ordered the immediate release from Woomera of Akram Al Masri. He had been detained for 15 months and his claim for refugee status had been rejected, but although he had agreed to return to Gaza, the bordering countries had refused him transit. DIMIA had been set to keep him in Woomera indefinitely but the court placed him in the care of his uncle and cousins. There are 50 more people thus trapped in Australia who are kept locked up indefinitely.



Al Masri on Henly Beach on his first day of Freedom, before being re-arrested

Developments at the time of press have seen Akram Al Masri re-arrested, and consequently re-released. His case is now being reassessed,

however, it is expected that he will be deported by October.

On August 27<sup>th</sup> Justice Merkel of the Federal court ruled that an Afghani asylum seeker be released from Curtin detention centre, pending further investigation. There was evidence he had been held illegally, for nine months after being found to be a refugee. He found that the law of September 2001 could not restrict the power of the courts to rule on cases of illegal detention or it would breach the constitution.

### **Comments - Jack Smit**

If one aspect of the tug-of-war between the Minister of Immigration and the Australian Federal Court stands out, it is the unbelievable and in my eyes glaring example of undermining of Australia's Justice system at the hand of Ruddock and his Department.

Not so long ago, if a Federal Court issued a certain order to the Immigration Department, this section of the Australian public service would simply comply with this and immediately do its job in Australia: issue, in accordance with its purely administrative functions, the necessary paperwork - in this case an appropriate collection of Visa papers for Mr Akram al Masri.

A few weeks ago the Federal Court issued such an order: for Akram al Masri to be freed, because it found him to be illegally detained. Yet last week, clearly under more or less covert instructions by the Minister for Immigration, Akram al Masri was arrested and again detained - and the comments from Immigration and the SA Police were that Mr Akram al Masri "did not have a visa". Today's *The Age* comments that the government had "thumbed its nose" at the order.

The showdown at the Federal Court will see another challenge by Ruddock of the court's order. I hope that the Court will reprimand Ruddock for his clear defiance of this court. It seems to me that this Minister needs to know once and for all that he is subject to the Australian Law, more so because he is a publicly appointed Minister of the Crown. I would charge him with 'contempt of court'.

### **Hiding their guilt?**

Immigration officials were also taken to task in the ACT Coroners Court, over their handling of the case of Shahrzad Kiane, who died after setting fire to himself outside

Parliament House last year. DIMIA was criticised by Coroner Shane Madden over its tardy approach on the release of document.

The 48-year-old Mr Kiane, a refugee from Pakistan in 1996, died in May last year, 55 days after setting fire to himself outside Parliament House in protest at the long delay in obtaining a decision on whether his wife and three daughters could join him in Australia. Mr Kiane's initial request to be reunited with his family was rejected because of the likely long-term health-care costs - \$750,000 was quoted by Mr Ruddock - due to one of his daughters' cerebral palsy.

A year ago, the Ombudsman released his final report, condemning the department over its handling of the case. He found that Mr Kiane had been denied natural justice and that the history of the case had been marked by ineptitude, broken promises and a long-standing bias against the family.

### **The case of the Bakhtiari family**

The most media publicity this August has gone to the father of feisty and articulate escapees 12 and 14 year old Alamdar and Montazar Bakhtiari, (who would surely make excellent migrants). Alastair McLeod for *The Australian*, and Russel Skelton for *The Age* travelled to Afghanistan to check the original story that had won him refugee status. They found he was unknown in the Afghan village from which he claimed to have come, nor could the alternative names he then suggested be found. He has, it seems, since retracted the story, and a case for revoking his visa will come before the Tribunal.

His case does not, however, reflect much credit or credibility on DIMIA or its Tribunal either, and not only because they seemingly got it wrong the first time. The new claim by DIMIA, that he is an economic migrant, a Pakistani plumber, has also not yet been substantiated. Russel Skelton is convinced that despite falsifying his identity he is indeed a Hazara and originally from Afghanistan, member of an often persecuted minority, from a region of war and famine, who have wandered insecurely, for years, in exile around the region. He seems to have lived for some time in Iran and perhaps Pakistan before seeking to come to Australia. There is nothing

in the new revelations that show why he represents any more danger to the country (we can always use more plumbers) than do the tens of thousands of overstayers, also guilty of visa transgressions, who came by air as tourists from places such as Britain, settled in here and worry no-one.

### **Let them live in the community!**

What is common to all these stories, even that of Bakhtiari, is the complexity of assessment of refugee claims and the likelihood of tribunal error through ignorance, incompetence or ill will. Two clear lessons follow: The first lesson is that DIMIA's tribunal cannot be trusted to be either efficient or fair and that the current removal of rights of judicial review in refugee cases (which can be matters of life and death to applicants) is a grave threat to justice and human rights.

The second lesson is that it is unacceptable (and expensive) to keep asylum seekers, especially families with children, locked up behind razor wire for years, sliding into suicidal depression, while an elusive truth is sought, or perhaps until US and Australian troops can supposedly make the world safe for their repatriation!



The 'Children Overboard' Hussains, finally reunited with their father in Sydney

The senate passed a resolution on 26<sup>th</sup> August calling on the Government to bring all refugees on Manus Island and Nauru to Australia and to release children (but not their families) from detention, but Labor failed to support Bob Brown's resolution to end mandatory detention.

We allow accused or convicted criminals to live in the community on bail or parole. Let asylum seekers do the same, during the lengthy investigations and appeals, after initial processing! Most have committed no crime (it is not illegal to arrive without permission in order to apply for asylum). None have been found to be a danger to the community, nor are they likely to be so. They are not even 'queue jumpers' because there is no queue, not even for the spouses and children of those living legally in Australia on protection visas. At worst a few are guilty of trespass and of fabricating a tale, hoping to find a better life.

### **Council votes for more humane response**

The Bega Valley Shire Council unanimously voted on Tuesday night to support the efforts of the Bega Valley Rural Australians for Refugees to bring a more humane response to the treatment of refugees currently held in detention centres.

Council also supported in principle the Welcome Towns proposal, subject to a Federal Government policy change permitting asylum seekers to be released into the community while their applications are determined.

The third part of the motion was that the Bega Valley Shire Council encourages the Federal Government to review its policies connected with asylum seekers/refugees with the aim of reducing the time people (particularly asylum seeker children and their families) are held in detention centres until relevant health and security checks are completed.

### **Like charging for the executioner's bullet**

In China, families of those executed are charged for the bullet. The Federal Government's similar policy of charging asylum seekers for their accommodation and other costs while in detention is to be challenged in the Federal Court in Sydney. Law firm Maurice Blackburn Cashman is launching the test case on behalf of a Pakistani asylum seeker, who was handed a \$26,000 bill for his six months in detention. Lawyer Josh Bornstein claims the practice is invalid, unlawful and unconstitutional. A total of nearly \$16mn has so far been billed. That debt to the Commonwealth can be later used by the

Government to stop an asylum seeker ever re-entering the country.

### **Second class citizens**

Jeremy Moore from the Woomera Lawyers Group claims Australian society now has two classes because of the Federal Government's use of Temporary Protection Visas (TPV):

People who are ordinary Australians and the other class, the lower class, the B-class are people who are on Temporary Protection Visas. They can't leave the country; they can't have any family reunification; they don't know what is going to happen to them. No other country around the world does that.

### **So why the cruelty?**

Four 12- and 13-year-old boys, locked up for almost a year, attempted suicide in the Woomera immigration compound in a six-week period, a Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission inquiry heard on 26th August.

Why lock up asylum seekers for years? Why keep families apart? Why spend thousands on

chartering a plane to return the Bakhtiari boys to Woomera before they could see their father? Is it just to whip up fear for electoral advantage? Is it out of hatred for those we know we have wronged? The justification given is almost equally abhorrent – to provide maximum punishment to some, for what is at worst a visa irregularity, in order to deter others from coming. This was the logic of deterrence that transported convicts to Australia for stealing a loaf of bread. But how much cruelty do you need to deter people fleeing persecution, war or famine or those who are seeking to rejoin loved ones?

---

Sources: ABC Lateline 8.8.02; ABC 7.30 Report 19.8.02; *The Australian*, 1.08.02; 07.08.02; 17.08.02; 27.08.02; *The Age* 3.08.02; 28.08.02; ABC News (various dates); Herald Sun 27.08.02; *The Canberra Times* 27.08.02; *The Advertiser*, 17.08.02.

[www.australi.edu.au/cases/Cth/FCAC/2002/228.html](http://www.australi.edu.au/cases/Cth/FCAC/2002/228.html) & /cth/federal\_ct/2002/1062.html

## **Asylum**

by Mehmet al Assad 2002

---

Will you please observe through the wire  
I am sewing my feet together  
They have walked about as far  
as they ever need to go.

Will you further observe  
through the wire  
I am sewing my heart together  
It is now so full of  
the ashes of my days

it will not hold any more.

Through the wire  
one last time  
please observe  
I am sewing my lips together  
that which you are denying us  
we should never have  
had to ask for.

## **Detention Centre costs**

Naomi Edwards BSc (Hons) FIA FIAA FNZSA *Project Safecom*, January 21, 2002

---

I estimate that the total cost of housing a detainee for a day in a detention centre is \$117. This is made up of an estimate DIMIA has given to the Senate of \$104 for direct costs plus a loading for indirect costs. During a year there are between 3000 and 4000 people living in the Detention Centres. Assuming an average of 3,500 people, this comes to \$150 million dollars per annum.

The detention manager - Australian Correctional Management Pty Ltd - is a subsidiary of Wackenhut Correctional Services, a US private prison manager... The Wackenhut [annual] report says that in the year to December 2000 DIMIA paid Wackenhut \$98 million dollars... [a] per person daily cost of \$77.

There is also a cost to DIMIA in overseeing the Detention Centres, ensuring compliance with the contract, running the Detention Task Force and dealing with issues such as the riots and fires at Woomera and so on. PR alone must be enormous... We have estimated the \$27 per day DIMIA cost as the balancing item to reach DIMIA's estimate given to the Senate of \$104 per person per day.

While most government departments are selling buildings and lands, DIMIA is buying and building more to house the detainees. In the year to Jun 2001 DIMA spent \$17 million on land purchase and building costs, after spending \$16 million in 2000...

### **Are there cheaper alternatives?**

A single Australian who is unable to work... is paid about \$250 a week ... If Australia were to allow its asylum seekers to live in the

community, and pay them the single persons disability allowance, the daily cost would reduced to \$63. This number of \$63 is overstated as it assumes that all the people living in Detention Centres are single adults. In fact, many are children and families, so the true cost would be much lower... By letting people live in the community, we have saved the Australian tax payer seventy million dollars each year.

But what about the cost of abscondee's? Suppose that those 15% of asylum seekers who are not ultimately granted asylum here escape to the community where they live out their days without being caught. These people's benefit would be terminated and, as Julian Burnside has Noted 'If they manage to stay out of the Government's way, it probably means they are living law-abiding lives'.

## **Asylum Seekers Consigned to a Life that Leads Nowhere**

*Flinders Journal* August-September 2002

---

The isolated locations of Australia's refugee camps not only produces loneliness and desperation among those who inhabit them, but also prevents Australian citizens from gaining any understanding of the plight of the asylum seekers, a Flinders law lecturer says.

Tina Dolgopol is a member of Action for Children, which received funding from the Law Foundation of South Australia to commission a newly published booklet, *Child Asylum Seekers - Living in Limbo*. The book, by Katherine Goode, comprises interviews with child refugees and the few professionals permitted contact with them in the refitted army barracks at Woomera.

"What we wanted to do was to make the asylum seekers, and the children in particular, more real to the Australian people," Ms Dolgopol said. "They are so far from people's view that it is easy to demonise them - we

wanted to humanise them..."

Ms Dolgopol said that when refugees from Kosovo were quartered in Adelaide, many local people volunteered their time to organise English classes, sporting and recreational activities. But if a group in Adelaide wanted to do something similar for detainees at Woomera, they would not be allowed into the facility to do it.

Over the last year or so, hardly anyone has been able to get in who is not a lawyer. We want people to question this - people from the Australian community who want to go in and work with the asylum seekers should be able to...

*Child Asylum Seekers - Living in Limbo* is available from Unibooks at Flinders or by contacting Ms Dolgopol in the Law School at Flinders.

## **Blinkered Approach Rips Families Apart**

by Mike Steketee. *The Australian* August 15, 2002

---

Is there any length to which the Howard Government is prepared not to go to persecute asylum-seekers? Apparently not. No prime minister in recent times has so lauded the

family and supported it with bucketloads of government money. But what is good enough for our citizens is not good enough for people fleeing from death, torture and imprisonment.

When the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees deals with members of the immediate families of people recognised as refugees – as it has been doing recently on Nauru – it grants them so-called derivative status. That is, it gives spouses and children the same rights as the refugees, so that the families can be reunited as soon as practicable.

### **Separating families**

That is only logical – or so you would think. A UNHCR submission to a Senate committee last week said: "The unity of family members is a fundamental human right."... The Australian Government, alone among industrialised countries, does not acknowledge it. Australian policy is to assess separately the families of refugees arriving by boat. In other words, they have to make out their own claim for why they have fled from their country of origin and cannot return. The result is that thousands of families have been split unnecessarily.

These are the immediate families of people already accepted as refugees – spouses and children... At least seven families on Nauru have raised with the UNHCR the rejection of their claims by the Immigration Department even though they have immediate family in Australia accepted as refugees. There are likely to be more on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island, where the UNHCR does not have a presence. There were 363 children in Pacific camps in May this year, according to an Oxfam Community Aid Abroad report released today.

### **ASIO Found No Threat**

*ABC Online News August 22, 2002*

---

ASIO says it has found no evidence so far that asylum seekers are a threat to Australia's security. During the election the Coalition linked asylum seekers to terrorist threats as part of its campaign on security issues. ASIO's director general

Then there are the many more remaining in their home countries who, before the policy changed in 1999, would have been automatically accepted after a family member had been recognised as a refugee in Australia. Now they face the option of waiting to be processed in Philip Ruddock's nonexistent queue or taking their own, increasingly slim, chances of making it to Australia. The result has been to force some people into the hands of the people-smugglers... including those who organised the fateful voyage that led to the drownings of 353 men, women and children off Indonesia last year...

### **Breaching human rights.**

The UNHCR submission to last week's Senate inquiry said Australia's treatment of immediate families could breach various human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, "as well as ignoring standards that Australia has helped to create and promote"...

Australia played a pioneering role in the adoption of the refugee convention after World War II and was one of the first countries to sign it. It now leads the way among signatory countries in abrogating provisions aimed at establishing international standards of decency. Instead of claiming, against all the evidence, that it continues to be a good international citizen, it should have the guts to revoke its membership of the convention. Then at least other countries and refugees would know exactly where we stand.

Denis Richardson says almost 6,000 people from countries of security interest such as Afghanistan and Iraq have been checked. "Up till now there have been no rejections on security grounds," he said.

### **Newcastle University: the first University Sanctuary?**

*Newcastle Herald August 23, 2002*

---

University of Newcastle students will hold a referendum to decide whether their campus should be a sanctuary for refugees. A student general meeting voted overwhelmingly

yesterday in favour of putting the issue to referendum. Of the 150 students who attended the meeting, 149 voted in favour of the motion. Student Association education officer,

Peter Robson said he expected the referendum to be held in three to four weeks. 'There are different ways students could help refugees,' he said. 'They could give them legal advice, the medical and nursing students could offer medical assistance. 'It depends on the level of

support. If we get a lot of people saying "yes" at the referendum, we're looking at mass civil disobedience.' Mr Robson said the vote was a statement from students supporting human rights.

**Will Flinders University be next?**

## **Mr Howard, How Can You Justify this Brutality?**

by Howard Dick. Associate professor at the University of Melbourne. *The Age*, August 2, 2002

---

Dear Mr Howard,  
"Offensive to human dignity". With these four words the UN human rights envoy, Justice Bhagwati, has encapsulated the moral vacuum at the heart of Australia's mandatory detention of refugees. For some time, Prime Minister, we have been following you down a narrowing and darkening tunnel. The descent has been quite gradual, but from time to time we have tripped over a threshold. As when we saw the photos of the three little girls drowned with 350 others in the sinking of what is referred to obscurely as SIEV X. As when we recently saw the child escapees returned to Woomera without meeting their distraught father. With Australia now refusing to sign the International Convention on Torture and shamelessly defending the incarceration of children, we sense that we are now below moral sea-level...

### **Mandatory detention is wrong.**

Our conscience knows that mandatory detention is wrong. It is wrong to imprison those who fled a regime against which we made war. It is crazy to expect refugees to have escaped with the correct forms, after waiting in an orderly queue outside a consulate in Taliban-controlled Kabul. It is stupid to think that those who risked everything to go to a foreign land are not the most desperate for freedom and likely to be the most enterprising of Australian citizens.

Above all, however, in 2002 we do not, after surviving the terrible 20th century, need these sorts of camps in Australia. These places, surrounded by barbed wire and watched continuously by guards, searchlights and

video cameras, in which those condemned to hopeless lives are deliberately maiming themselves and committing suicide, are indeed Aussie-style concentration camps. A day is quite long enough for a reasonably perceptive person to draw this conclusion.

### **We can't say we did not know.**

The defence of ordinary citizens against the evil of concentration camps, whether in Nazi Germany, apartheid South Africa or Milosevic's Yugoslavia, was invariably "we did not know". Today in Australia, thanks to a vigorous media, we do know. Our problem is to find the "=" sign in the moral equation... The clearest of all lessons from the war-torn 20th century is that we ignore individual conscience at our peril. It is one of our few defences against the power of the state and its relentless propaganda. Compassion and generosity are fundamental values in a civilised society.

Even if we continue to deceive ourselves, we do not deceive the rest of the world. Justice Bhagwati's report is further proof of the great harm being done to Australia's hard-earned reputation as an enlightened, tolerant and democratic society. Governments elsewhere may be turning to the right, refugees may be becoming an issue in many other countries, but shouldn't we be ashamed to lead the rest of the world in democratic brutality?

---

Our thanks to Jack Smit of Project SafeCom for forwarding much of this information. To subscribe to Project SafeCom's Newsletters, send a blank email to [safecom-subscribe@topica.com](mailto:safecom-subscribe@topica.com)

# Children at Woomera

By Juan Garrido Salgado

---

I am going to plant peace in the desert  
I am going to plant hearts and hands together  
In the desert of my blank page  
I am going to draw a peace dove in the sky of Woomera  
I am going to draw an open gate for the Detention Centre.

I am going to draw a bus full of flowers and visiting friends  
I am going to draw a bus to take all the people from Woomera  
And welcome them into our homes  
I am going to draw a tree with a Magpie and a Koala,  
I am going to draw a red Kangaroo and tell its story to the children  
I am going to draw a Moon playing with the Sun in my garden  
I am going to draw streets full with people and neighbours  
Talking and singing together  
I am going to harvest my apple and orange trees  
And give them the fruits on their tables.  
I am going to write: Welcome  
In the corner of my poem.

2

I will draw a barbed wire fence with the eyes of children  
Colour blind like prisoners in the desert  
How can I write verses of peace for them?  
When they cry so

I saw 18 drawings by the children of Woomera  
Each of one of these was a drawing for our conscience,  
For our stone's heart.

I saw 18 drawings by the children of Woomera  
Each one of these was a drawing for our walls  
Like a bird in cage without water or love

I saw 18 drawings by the children of Woomera  
Each one of these was a drawing for us

They draw every day,  
Every hour, every minute of every day  
Within barbed wire fence

I saw 18 drawings by the children of Woomera  
A drawing of sand of a broken wind in the desert

A drawing of the oblivion of a broken humanity  
For each and every one of us.

3

Peace in Woomera is a cry  
Peace in Woomera is not a place to fly  
Peace in Woomera is a desert prison  
Without flowers or trees or birds  
Peace in Woomera is a long walk to our own hearts  
To see with the eyes of compassion and dignity  
For all the people on this land.

Juan Garrido Salgado, a Flinders Chilout supporter, is a Chilean poet and a former political prisoner of Pinochet dictatorship. He and his family arrived in Australia in 1990. He continues in solidarity and his

writing is much about human rights issue and social justice. He and family belong to the Romero Community –Adelaide.

## Chilout (Children Out of Detention) Flinders University Branch

We are a sister of a national organisation campaigning against mandatory detention of asylum seekers, especially children, and to get all children, together with their accompanying families or primary carers, out of Immigration Detention Centres and into existing community support structures. **See Chilout's web page: <http://www.chilout.org>**

There are at present still some 30 asylum seeker children at Woomera detention centre, in breach of UN conventions and basic human rights. Some have been there for years and many are highly traumatised.

### Main aims:

- a) To campaign for the release of all asylum seeking children and their families from detention.
- b) To cooperate with other organisations working for refugee rights.
- c) To extend our support to young refugees living in Adelaide on temporary protection visas (TPVs). We would try to facilitate their involvement with Flinders students through social gatherings, and encouraging them to enrol next year for the Foundation Course.

### Planned future activities include:

- a) **Social and sporting activities** where young refugees and students can meet and get to know each other. Everyone welcome:

**Soccer.** Every Saturday starting at 3.30pm at Flinders Ovals. No experience needed.

**Picnics on the Flinders plaza:** 1<sup>st</sup> and third Saturdays of each month at 2pm (bring food and drink to share, music etc)

**Next Picnics: Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2pm. All welcome.**

- b) **Publicity and agitation for refugees:**

Regular issues of this bulletin; Public meetings at Flinders with national speakers (in October); Collection of signatures on the Chilout petition.

Fund raising dinners.

## Meetings First Tuesday of each month

**Next meeting Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October, 6pm in the Religious Centre, Flinders University, Bedford Park.**

**All Welcome.**

For more information email: [rita@jabris.com](mailto:rita@jabris.com) or

Constance.Lever-tracy@flinders.edu.au or amy.specht@flinders.edu.au

“The plethora of refugee activist groups that have formed across the political spectrum would appear to be the largest rainbow coalition since the Vietnam War”. (Guy Rundle, *The Australian*, Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June, p13)