



Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

MR1508
29 July 2008

Media Release

LCA Welcomes the Beginning of the End for Australia's Immigration Detention Policy

The Law Council of Australia has welcomed today's announcement by the Federal Government that immigration detention will only be used as a last resort for those who pose a danger to the community.

Law Council President Ross Ray QC said, "For more than a decade we have been strongly and consistently opposed to mandatory, indefinite and non-reviewable immigration detention."

He said the Law Council had repeatedly called for the Federal Government to abolish the mandatory detention of all asylum seekers who arrive in Australia without a valid visa, and to replace that policy with a limited form of reviewable detention.

"The Law Council is pleased that some of the checks and balances associated with the rule of law will be reintroduced into the system. We are particularly pleased that the Immigration Department will have to conduct three-monthly reviews as to whether those detained should continue to be held," he said.

"We are also pleased that unauthorised persons arriving by boat will have access to legal assistance and an independent review of unfavourable decisions."

Mr Ray said the changes announced today would go some way towards restoring Australia's tarnished reputation among international human rights bodies. Only two months ago the UN Committee Against Torture recommended that Australia abolish mandatory detention and emphasised that detention should only be used as a last resort with limits on maximum periods.

"Today's announcement marks the beginning of the end of Australia's shameful policy of mandatory, indefinite and non-reviewable immigration detention," Mr Ray said.

"The Law Council looks forward to further moves to increase Australia's compliance with its human rights obligations following the outcome of the current Parliamentary Inquiry into migration detention in Australia," Mr Ray concluded.

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The Law Council of Australia exists to represent the legal profession at the national level, to speak on behalf of its constituent bodies on national issues, and to promote the administration of justice, access to justice and general improvement of the law.



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