



MEDIA RELEASE

(For Immediate Release)

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ASIO security assessments need independent review

CASE for Refugees Principal Solicitor, Shayla Strapps, says that CASE for Refugees supports David Manne's High Court challenge to the ASIO security assessments. She says that CASE has had a number of requests for assistance from clients who have been granted refugee status but who have not been granted a visa due to a negative security assessment. Essentially these clients are left in indefinite detention. They cannot return to their country and they have nowhere else to go.

Strapps says "These clients are not provided with any details as to what is in the security assessment, or given any opportunity to challenge it. The system is shrouded in secrecy and no-one knows what the assessment process is. You can't have a system where people are effectively found guilty of something and have no opportunity to plead or defend themselves. It is also arguably a breach of international law and CASE implores the Government to take steps to resolve this as soon as possible"

"CASE recognises that it is imperative that Australia maintain a very high level of security for everyone who enters Australia. However, it must also be balanced against the requirement for natural justice. Systems are in place in New Zealand and Britain and Canada which do exactly that."

CASE's concerns were shared by the recent report by the Joint Select Committee in Immigration Detention (March 2012) which made two recommendations (Recommendation 27 and 28) about negative security assessments and the review of those assessments. The Committee also expressed their grave concern about the effect that the lack of appeal processes was having on those who had been granted refugee status but could not be granted a visa. CASE encourages the Government to take steps to implement both of those recommendations without delay.

Ms Strapps: "Australia is a country with a strong and independent legal system. People are innocent until proven guilty. We must balance the need for Australia's security with ensuring that every person who enters Australia has the opportunity to access that system and have appropriate attention be given to any decision which is made about them."

About CASE for Refugees

CASE for Refugees is Western Australia's only Community Legal Centre providing specialist legal services to refugees, asylum seekers and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) communities. Operating since 2002, CASE has assisted thousands of clients from over 36 countries many of whom have been victims of torture and trauma.

In 2011, CASE's Principle Solicitors, Amanda Goodier and Shayla Strapps were awarded the prestigious WA Law Society's Lawyers of the Year Award in recognition of their work and service.