



Refugee Council
of Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

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REFUGEE COUNCIL WELCOMES OMBUDSMAN'S REPORTS INTO WRONGFUL DETENTION

The Refugee Council of Australia has welcomed today's release by the Commonwealth Ombudsman of three reports into the detention of 20 people by the Department of Immigration between 2000 and 2005.

President John Gibson said the reports provided valuable insights into the wrongful detention of people during a period when many community advocates were raising concerns about the treatment of people in immigration detention.

"The Refugee Council welcomes the Australian Government's statement that it will adopt the recommendations in the Commonwealth Ombudsman's reports," Mr Gibson said.

"In the years leading up to 2005, Australia's immigration detention regime was characterised by punitive and harsh measures which, on many occasions, failed to respect basic human rights.

"In looking back, we Australians must acknowledge that our Government's immigration detention system caused great harm to many people and severely damaged our nation's reputation as a compassionate and humane society.

"We are pleased that last year the Government drew a line in the sand and began a much-needed overhaul of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

"The Government's preparedness to acknowledge the tragic mistakes of the past is an important signal that things have changed. Constant vigilance is needed to ensure that these mistakes are not repeated."