



Refugee Council
of Australia

5 April 2011

NEW DETENTION CENTRE: SAME PROBLEMS, MORE COST

The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) has expressed dismay at the Australian Government's announcement that it will develop yet another immigration detention facility.

The decision to develop a Defence facility in Pontville, Tasmania into a 400-bed immigration detention centre will do nothing to address the underlying problems in Australia's approach to immigration detention, RCOA Chief Executive Officer Paul Power said.

According to the Government's announcement, the centre will operate for around six months and the construction cost alone will be \$15 million. The centre will house asylum seekers while awaiting the construction of a new detention facility at Wickham Point near Darwin.

"The Pontville plan is an elaborate, inhumane and costly way to deal with 400 people who have committed no crime and for whom there is no demonstrable reason for continued detention," Mr Power said.

"The Government should look to develop a detention policy that balances risk management with humane treatment, not simply relocate the same problems to new sites. Reducing people's time in detention would be a more humane and efficient way to deal with the issues of overcrowding at the Christmas Island facilities and elsewhere.

"The continued expansion of detention centres is contrary to the Government's own policy that detention should be used 'as a last resort and for the shortest practicable time'. There is evidence from across Europe and North America of successful policies that see much larger numbers of asylum seekers released into community arrangements after identity, health and screening processes.

"Australia does not need more detention centres. We need the Government to show leadership and reconsider indefinite detention."

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