

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Friday 23rd November 2012

The Government's decision to respond to the failure of its deterrence policy by punishing refugees will only result in ever increasing financial and human costs. Forcing genuine refugees to remain on bridging visas for up to five years will have significant financial costs for the community as these people will rely on (meagre) government payments and the goodwill of concerned Australians to survive. However, the human costs of resulting from uncertainty, deprivation, and long-term unemployment will be even greater. My organisation has worked with asylum seekers and refugees over many years and we have seen firsthand the profound impact that uncertainty and disadvantage have on them. With its most recent announcement, the Government has decided to marginalise refugees even further. This will only serve to exacerbate the trauma of the refugee experience. As a community we need to rediscover our humanity and treat refugees and asylum seekers with respect, and as human beings who are in need. It is only then that they will have the opportunity to move forward from their traumatic pasts and become active members of our community.

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