

2 October 2020

Catholic Religious Australia opposes the Migration Amendment Bill 2020

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) strongly opposes the Migration Amendment (Prohibiting Items in Immigration Detention Facilities) Bill 2020 which the Senate intends to pass next week. CRA believes that there is no need for this Bill, as the Government already has the powers to deal with the issues that the Bill seeks to address.

“This Bill will punish innocent detainees by limiting their rights to privacy, contact and connection with family members, and legal representation – it may even increase the rate of self-harm in detention,” said CRA President, Br Peter Carroll FMS.

“It’s unreasonable to declare non illegal items, such as mobile phones and SIM cards, as ‘prohibited’ and be able to confiscate them from the entire population of detainees, rather than from only high-risk detainees involved in criminal activity,” said CRA President, Br Peter Carroll FMS.

The criminal element in immigration detention facilities should be dealt with by police and the criminal law process. A blanket approach is inappropriate.

The Bill expands the search and seizure powers already in existence, such as strip searches without warrants and allows the Minister to determine what ‘things’ are prohibited, instead of them being specified in the Act. The measures contained in the Bill seem disproportionate in relation to the security risks posed in immigration detention and may infringe on Human Rights, added Br Peter.

CRA stands in solidarity with St Vincent de Paul Society National Council, Law Council of Australia, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Refugee Council of Australia and many others against this Bill and in support of the fair and humane treatment of all people, including detainees.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Sylvia MacRitchie-Hook

E: comms@catholicreligious.org.au

M: 0410 644 356