

**Submission to Queensland Government Legal Affairs and Community Safety
Subcommittee:**

Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012-11-07

This Bill was presented to the house on 1 November 2012. My submission concerns section 106B of this Bill, which explicitly removes impediments to the Queensland government discriminating against individuals in the provision of public services on the grounds of visa status. The given reason for introducing this measure is that “public resources are finite. Limits must often be placed on who is eligible for government funded assistance”.

While I empathise that governments often need to make tough decisions about how to apportion funding, I do not believe that this represents sound evidence-based policy making, and is simply a ‘quick fix’ to address a perceived problem without any real attempt to quantify the nature or the extent of the issue (if there even is one?). I also note that very limited consultation has been conducted on this proposal and that there have been no attempts to consult those potentially affected by the proposal (including non-Australians and Australians). There has been no attempt to quantify any negative impacts that may accrue to Queensland public (for instance, loss of revenue from tourism due to Queensland being viewed as anti-New Zealand).

I have resided in Australia for nine years (and in Queensland for two years) and during this time have been continuously employed in highly paid roles. Not only have I paid a considerable amount of tax over the years, but I have significantly participated in the Australian economy through buying and selling two homes and contribute to the Australian superannuation pool. I believe that this proposal would unfairly discriminate against me from potentially receiving services for which I personally contribute to the funding of.

I have considered becoming a permanent resident since I arrived in Australia, however do not meet the requirements for residence as a skilled migrant, despite the fact that I was originally recruited to a position for which my employer was unable to find an Australian to fill and I hold a Masters level tertiary qualification. It is my view that New Zealanders wishing to obtain permanent residence are disadvantaged, as the pathways are geared toward migrants from other countries and do not easily accommodate New Zealanders.

This proposal serves to reinforce stereotypes that New Zealanders simply ‘bludge off Australia’, which is an opinion formed and based on no actual data or evidence whatsoever. It also conveniently ignores the contribution made by New Zealanders to the Queensland economy by filling labour market shortages and the fact that Australians residing in New Zealand are accorded far more equitable conditions. It is my observation that most Australians with whom I associate – including family, friends, neighbours and colleagues value the trans-Tasman relationship and do not seek to alienate New Zealanders in the community.

Submitted by: Donna Soo

Date: 08 November 2012

Address: [REDACTED]

Daytime telephone: [REDACTED]