

DEMOCRATS MEDIA

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LEADER, AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS (SA)

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LEAD SENATE CANDIDATE FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

BAXTER CLOSURE – GOODBYE AND GOOD RIDDANCE

The closure of Baxter Detention Centre ends a shameful chapter in South Australia's history but the fight for a humane refugee policy has not ended say the Australian Democrats.

"Australians should not forget that thousands of men, women and children were locked up behind high security razor wire just because they fled to Australia for help" said Ms Russell.

"Hundreds of children were exposed to their parents collapsing into depression after years of senseless imprisonment and they saw adults driven to desperate acts of self-harm", she continued.

"Howard's Liberal Government will go down in history as a serial human rights abuser," said Sandra Kanck. "But the State Liberals went along with this policy. Who can forget Dean Brown's attacks on refugees over the children sewing their lips together. This act of desperation was manipulated by cynical state politicians, too scared to speak up for human rights.

"And Labor was almost as bad. They spoke out on safe issues, like allegations of child abuse but used any disturbance in detention centres as an opportunity to play the law and order card just to make sure they kept the vote of the racist and the fearful", said Ms Kanck.

"This occasion should not pass without remembering the courage of the many refugees who held their families together, saved their friends from suicide attempts, organised peaceful petitions and hunger strikes to protest the abuses of detention and then after leaving detention became unpaid welfare workers for the refugee community, said Ms Russell.

"The Democrats also salute the generosity of the many ordinary Australians who protested, visited people in detention and pooled their money to support them when they left detention," said Ms Kanck. They kept the dream of a fair Australia alive at a time when the cynicism and cowardice of our leaders could have killed it off for decades", she concluded.



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