

REPORT BY THE COMMONWEALTH AND IMMIGRATION OMBUDSMAN FOR TABLING IN PARLIAMENT

Under s 486O of the Migration Act 1958

This is the first s 486O report on Mr X who remained in restricted immigration detention for a cumulative period of more than 30 months (two and a half years).

Name	Mr X
Citizenship	Country A
Year of birth	1980
Ombudsman ID	1003082
Date of DIBP's reports	21 April 2015 and 13 October 2015
Total days in detention	913 (at date of DIBP's latest report)

Detention history

14 April 2013	Mr X was detained under s 189(1) of the <i>Migration Act 1958</i> after arriving on the Australian mainland aboard Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel (SIEV) 648 <i>Weinem</i> , indicating that he may have arrived as a 'direct entry person'. ¹ He was transferred to Northern Immigration Detention Centre (IDC), Darwin.
10 May 2013	Mr X escaped from Northern IDC. He was located by police the following day and re-detained under s 189(1).
2 July 2013	Transferred to Yongah Hill IDC.
15 July 2013	Transferred to Curtin IDC.
24 July 2013	Transferred to Yongah Hill IDC.
25 January 2014	Transferred to Christmas Island IDC.
29 June 2015	Transferred to Yongah Hill IDC.
30 June 2015	Transferred to Perth IDC.
22 July 2015	Transferred to Christmas Island IDC.
1 October 2015	Transferred to Yongah Hill IDC.
26 November 2015	Granted a Bridging visa and released from detention.

Visa applications/case progression

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) advised that prior to ministerial intervention, Mr X was part of a cohort who had not had their protection claims assessed as they arrived in Australia after 13 August 2012 and were subject to the bar under s 46A.

¹ A maritime arrival to Australia's mainland who is seeking protection. Maritime arrivals who arrived as 'direct entry persons' after 13 August 2012 and before 20 May 2013 are not subject to the s 46A bar.

12 August 2014	DIBP notified Mr X of the unintentional release of personal information ² and advised that the privacy breach would be taken into account when considering his protection claims.
29 September 2015	The Minister lifted the bar under s 46A to allow Mr X to lodge a temporary visa application. At the time of DIBP's review, he was is yet to be invited to lodge a temporary visa application.
13 October 2015	Mr X's case was referred on a ministerial submission for consideration under s 195A for the grant of a Bridging visa.
26 November 2015	Granted a Bridging visa.

Health and welfare

15 April 2013	International Health and Medical Services (IHMS) advised that Mr X disclosed a history of torture and trauma but declined specialist counselling.
24 April 2013	Diagnosed with hepatitis B following routine pathology testing. He was referred for a liver ultrasound.
July 2014	The liver ultrasound identified no abnormalities. Prior to his release from detention, his condition was monitored by a general practitioner (GP).
March 2015	During a mental health assessment, Mr X advised that he was struggling with his ongoing detention and inability to plan for the future. IHMS reported that he declined support from the mental health team.
8 July 2015	Presented to a GP with lower back pain. An x-ray identified degenerative abnormalities and he was prescribed with medication. Prior to his release from detention, his condition was monitored by a GP.

Detention incidents

5 September 2014	A DIBP Incident Report recorded that Mr X was involved in an altercation with detainees of a different ethnicity.
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Other matters

13 July 2015	DIBP advised that Mr X appeared before the Perth Magistrates Court in relation to his escape from Northern IDC on 10 May 2013. He was acquitted of all charges.
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² In a media release dated 19 February 2014 the former Minister advised that an immigration detention statistics report was released on DIBP's website on 11 February 2014 which inadvertently disclosed detainees' personal information. The documents were removed from the website as soon as DIBP became aware of the breach from the media. The Minister acknowledged this was a serious breach of privacy by DIBP.

28 July 2015	<p>The Ombudsman's office requested information from DIBP about the circumstances of the arrival of a number of people from SIEV 662 <i>Lambeth</i> who were detained on the Australian mainland, apparently as 'direct entry persons', but have been subject to the bar under s 46A.</p> <p>The Ombudsman's office also identified that there may be more people who arrived in similar circumstances to those of SIEV <i>Lambeth</i>.</p>
30 July 2015 – 25 August 2015	DIBP advised on four occasions that it expected to provide clarification as soon as information had been sourced from other areas within DIBP.
1 September 2015	<p>The Ombudsman's office opened an investigation into the arrival and detention circumstances of people who arrived in Australian waters on 17 April 2013 aboard SIEV <i>Lambeth</i>.</p> <p>The Ombudsman's office also identified that there may be more arrivals, including Mr X who arrived on SIEV <i>Weinem</i>, who arrived in similar circumstances to those of SIEV <i>Lambeth</i>.</p> <p>A response from DIBP was requested by 30 September 2015 but not received.</p>
2 October 2015 – 22 October 2015	DIBP advised on three occasions that its response was awaiting clearance and would be delayed.
13 November 2015	The Ombudsman's office requested further information under its own motion powers into the arrival and detention circumstances of people who arrived in Australian waters between 13 August 2012 and 20 May 2013 who appeared to have been detained on the Australian mainland as 'direct entry persons' but remained subject to the s 46A bar.
26 November 2015	The matter was raised at a meeting with senior DIBP staff and it was requested that a response to the investigation into the people who arrived on SIEV <i>Lambeth</i> be provided to the Ombudsman's office by 10 December 2015.
16 December 2015	DIBP provided a response to the Ombudsman's request for information.
23 December 2015	<p>The Ombudsman notified the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection of his intention to conduct an investigation under his own motion powers into DIBP's administration of the detention of people who arrived in Australian waters on SIEV <i>Lambeth</i>.</p> <p>The Ombudsman further advised the Minister that he would ask DIBP to look further at other boats where the arrivals were detained in Darwin around the same period of time.</p>
25 February 2016	DIBP advised that an internal investigation had commenced to examine the issues raised by the Ombudsman's own motion investigation and that it will keep the Ombudsman advised as this progresses.
20 April 2016	DIBP provided its response to the Ombudsman's investigation.

Ombudsman assessment

Mr X was granted a Bridging visa on 26 November 2015 and released from immigration detention.

Mr X was detained on 14 April 2013 after arriving in Australia aboard SIEV *Weinem* and was held in restricted detention for a cumulative period of more than two and a half years before being granted a Bridging visa.

The Ombudsman notes that DIBP considered that Mr X was subject to the bar under s 46A for more than two and a half years until the Minister lifted the bar on 29 September 2015 to allow Mr X to apply for a temporary visa.

On the basis of the information available to the Ombudsman at the time of this report, it would appear that Mr X may not have been subject to the s 46A bar due to his arrival and detention on the Australian mainland as an apparent 'direct entry person' on 14 April 2013.

The Ombudsman notes that DIBP has commenced an internal investigation into the issues raised by the Ombudsman's own motion investigation and provided a response to some of the issues on 20 April 2016. The Ombudsman is considering DIBP's response and makes no recommendations in this report.