

Monday, 28 August 2017

Nothing ‘un-Australian’ about human rights, the Constitution and the rule of law

The Immigration Minister's attack on lawyers and law firms as ‘un-Australian’ for providing pro bono legal assistance to asylum seekers is regrettable and misguided, according to the Law Council of Australia.

Immigration Minister Peter Dutton made [the remarks](#) on breakfast radio this morning.

Law Council of Australia President, Fiona McLeod SC, utterly rejected the comments aimed at legal professionals who are assisting asylum seekers to pursue rights that exist under international and Australian law.

"It is true that the legal rights of individuals can be an inconvenience to Government, so attacking the legal professionals who work pro bono to defend those rights is truly extraordinary," Ms McLeod said.

"There is nothing more Australian than ensuring people are subject to the rule of law and have their legal rights protected.

"The Australian legal system reflects fundamental Australian values, including the right to have your case heard, the right to not be arbitrarily detained and the right not to be subjected to cruel or inhumane treatment.

"It is often the case that those seeking asylum are fleeing countries where the rule of law has broken-down.

"We have a long and proud history of politicians understanding the importance of showing respect for the independence of our legal system. Today's comments represent an extraordinary break with that history," Ms McLeod said.

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