



# **Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network**

**MEDIA RELEASE – 29 SEPTEMBER 2011**

## **CRUEL POLICIES BEHIND DETENTION CENTRE CHAOS**

The Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network (“DASSAN”) today called for a major rethink as to how this country treats asylum seekers following another protest inside the Northern Immigration Detention Centre in Darwin.

30 asylum seekers have buried themselves in a mock grave inside NIDC. Media reports indicate SERCO is flying in guards from around the country to end the protest. This protest is the latest incident in a year of chaos inside NIDC, Australia’s most dysfunctional and cruel immigration detention centre. Rohan Thwaites, member of DASSAN stated “this protest is another example of what detention centres are doing to the mental health of people inside NIDC. This year DASSAN has received dozens of reports from inside NIDC of suicide attempts and self harm incidents. Mandatory detention is the cause of these incidents and it is ultimately the cause of today’s protest.”

“The Darwin community deserves to know the truth of what is occurring at NIDC and the Department of Immigration should release the figures for how many people inside NIDC have attempted suicide, self harmed or are on medication as a result of mental trauma. What is occurring in NIDC is a humanitarian disaster and today’s protest is another example of a chaotic and cruel detention centre.”

Mr Thwaites added “the answer to all of these problems is community detention. Community detention is cheaper and more humane. Most asylum seekers inside NIDC will be released and will become Australians. Tragically that only occurs after they first have to suffer the trauma of mandatory detention”.

For media comment :

Rohan Thwaites, Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network –  
0402555841.