**Member’s letter to UniSuper**

Below is a sample letter that UniSuper members can use to send to UniSuper urging them to divest from the mandatory detention industry. Please use this letter in full or adapt it. A personalised letter will be taken more seriously, however you can use information in this letter to strengthen your own argument.

Let us know the feedback/response you get!

Email your letter to:

Dear

My name is \_\_\_\_ and I am a UniSuper member. I am writing to call upon UniSuper to divest from the mandatory detention industry through the companies Transfield Services, Decmil and Serco. I am gravely concerned that my retirement savings, which are invested in UniSuper, are contributing to profits raised from the internment of asylum seekers in inhumane conditions, exposing them to further harm and danger.

UniSuper has confirmed that members’ retirement savings are invested in Decmil, a company which has received contracts from the Australian government worth several hundreds of millions of dollars for their construction of detention and ‘transit’ centres on Manus Island. The latter camp, in East Lorengau, interns asylum seekers whose refugee status has been determined in the positive.

UniSuper also has concerning links with Transfield Services (Transfield hereafter). Whilst claims have been made both by the NTEU and UniSuper that there is at the present moment no exposure to Transfield, this is not a sufficiently clear case of divestment. UniSuper has owned shares in Transfield in the past. Whilst it is a positive step that these shares have been sold, UniSuper must make a permanent, public and ongoing commitment to not investing in the abuses of the detention system. Members are also concerned by the role of Investments Committee chair Ian Martin, who also chairs Argo Investments Ltd – one of the largest investors in Transfield. Our retirement savings should not be subject to such conflicts of interest, which could be seen by some to be the reason for UniSuper’s refusal to make a principled statement of divestment so far.

There is no ethical basis on which to justify the use of UniSuper members’ retirement savings to bolster the public-private partnership of the state and an industry which profits politically and financially from the human horror that is the mandatory detention system. The recent Human Rights Commission Inquiry into the 518 children in detention as well as the murder of Reza Berati and the death due to severe neglect of Hamid Kehazaei, both interned on Manus Island, are all testimony to the brutality of a system designed not to process applications for refugee status, but to punish and deter others from coming to Australia.

The detention industry is shrouded by secrecy and misinformation: health and community services workers have been threatened with criminal prosecution for blowing the whistle on the sexual abuse of children within these detention facilities and access to the remote camps on Nauru and Manus Island is extremely limited. Extraordinarily, Transfield recently made the offer to fund managers who invest in their company the opportunity to tour the camps: the fact that such a corporation is able to make such an offer when press, lawyers, migration agents and even Australian parliamentarians struggle to get access to these centres demonstrates the disturbing ascendancy of corporate profits over rule of law in Australia’s mandatory detention industry.

As a member of UniSuper, I am calling on you to cease investing my funds and those of my colleagues in the mandatory detention industry through your investments in Decmil, Transfield Services and any other investments in mandatory detention. Complete divestment is the only way of ensuring our funds are used ethically and securely. I am sure that you will take our concerns as members seriously and do the right thing.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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