**[Church/School letterhead, including address]**

**[Date]**

Dear **[Prime Minister Morrison/Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese/Local MP]**,

In May this year, the National Council of Churches, the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce and various Jewish, Muslim and Christian faith leaders issued a statement.

The statement called on the newly elected Federal Government to resolve the plight of the people held in Australia’s immigration camps in Manus Island and Nauru, some of whom are now in Port Moresby or in Australia for medical reasons.

On behalf of the **[church congregation/school community]**, the **[name]** Council supports this call for a ‘Jubilee’ for them; a Biblical principle whereby people who have long been trapped in bleak circumstances are given a special dispensation for a new beginning.

Evidence abounds that indefinite detention and ongoing uncertainty destroys people’s mental and physical health. The people remaining in PNG and Nauru have been held there since July 2013. They have lost all hope of rebuilding their lives and being reunited with their families. Many have partners and children still living in very unsafe situations, which compounds their anguish. This despair has led to an increase in acts of self-harm, as people have lost the strength to go on. Some people been brought here for medical treatment, but continue to be held indefinitely in onshore immigration detention facilities or other places of detention. They are also unable to move on with their lives, and they live with the constant fear of being returned to Manus Island, Nauru or back to persecution in their countries of origin.

On matters regarding refugees, we take guidance from the following Scriptures:

“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

(Leviticus 19: 33 – 34)

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

(Luke 4: 18 – 19)

People who exercised their legal right to seek safety in Australia from life-threatening persecution, but were instead sent to Manus Island and Nauru, have been mistreated by Australia and have suffered far too much. We urgently call on all Members of Parliament and Senators to take a non-partisan approach to end the humanitarian crisis which has been created by indefinite offshore detention. We urge Members and Senators to immediately provide a Jubilee and release the captives by resettling, in Australia and New Zealand, the people who fall under the current “offshore processing” cohort. As the government explained with the USA resettlement program, if the Jubilee only applies to people who are currently part of that cohort, it will not encourage more boats to arrive.

Yours faithfully,

**[Name]**

**[Position]**

**[Church/School]**