

July 2024

11 Years of Trauma - 11 Years Too Long ENOUGH is ENOUGH

Available to download at:

- <https://aran.net.au/resources/letter-writing/>
- <https://ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org.au/write-a-letter>



Included in this kit is the information you need to create your own letters or use the proformas

- Guide and Background notes prepared by ARAN's Letter Writing Network.
- Postal Addresses for MPs and Senators
- Email addresses for MPs and Senators
- Suggested points to mention in your letter or email.

Personalised letters are best –

- You might like to use the **AIDA** principle
 - **A - Attention** - grab the recipient's attention. Say something positive about the reader that is directed towards the focus of your letter. Stimulate the recipient's curiosity
 - **I - Interest & Information**- encourage the recipient to read on.
 - **D - Desire** - Getting the reader to want to do what you are seeking - in their interest to do so.
 - **A - Action**- inform the reader of the action you want them to take.

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The ARAN Letter Writing Network

Contact: [austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com](mailto:austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com)

# 11 Years of Trama = 11 years Too Long ENOUGH is ENOUGH

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## Why it is important to write about this issue.

After 11 long years, the punitive consequences of the July 2013 change to refugee policy are still being felt.

- Approximately 50 refugees and asylum seekers are still trapped in PNG. These men are the responsibility of the Australian Government which transported them there. Australia has abandoned these men, and since Nov 2023, the men have been denied basic support food and medical treatment.
- The remaining refugees on Nauru were brought to Australia in September 2023, but since then people intercepted on boats north of Australia have been taken to Nauru. There are reportedly 100 people detained on Nauru now. Detainees on Nauru report conditions to be much the same as during the “bad” old days: difficulty accessing medical care and other services; uncertainty and hopelessness due to lack of information about what’s to happen to them.
- Approximately one thousand people previously held in PNG or Nauru who were brought to Australia for medical treatment are living in the Australian community on insecure bridging visas. They are denied permanent protection and have limited rights to work, education and health care.

When in Opposition, the ALP was critical of how Coalition Governments managed Australia’s regional processing regime. Labor politicians pointed to the lack of transparency, the unacceptable living conditions, the length of time people were being held offshore, and lack of resettlement plans. Yet we see this same regime being continued under the Labor government. The Albanese government continues the punitive, and extremely expensive, practice of refusing resettlement and banishing people offshore with no hope for the future simply because they sought safety by sea. The relentless cruelty must stop. The tragedies of the past must not be repeated.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 19<sup>th</sup> July 2013, then Prime Minister Rudd announced that all asylum seekers arriving by sea would be sent to immigration detention centres in PNG and Nauru, and would never be allowed to settle in Australia. Between then and June 2023, 3,127 people were sent to PNG and Nauru under this policy. This has resulted in untold misery for innocent people fleeing war and persecution, and has cost Australia over \$14 billion. Eleven years on, there are still people being held in PNG; increasing numbers of people are being detained on Nauru; and thousands of men, women and children in the Australian community still have no permanent resettlement solution, condemned to a life of insecurity and limited opportunities. Too many people still suffer from years of abuse and neglect in detention.

- The refugees and asylum seekers remaining in PNG have had no food, money, utilities, safe transportation or adequate medical care provided since November 2023. They are surviving on donations from concerned Australian citizens – and this support is not sustainable. On 4 July it was reported that the Australian Government has finally agreed to reinstate funding for basic supports for the men in PNG – but the details of the arrangement with the PNG Government are ‘secret’. While this is welcome, it will not provide safe and secure futures for these people.
- They have been subjected to violence, robbery and assault and continue to live in very unsafe conditions. Leaving these men in PNG is actively harming their mental and physical health.
- A small number of the men are being resettled in third countries, but this will take years to be completed. Some men have no resettlement option, being ineligible for NZ, Canada or the US. Others are too ill to participate in any resettlement process - they need urgent transfer to Australia for medical treatment.
- The effects of offshore and indefinite detention have been documented to include immense short- and long-term harm, including anxiety and depression, suicidal behaviour and psychosis. It was especially damaging to the hundreds of children held on Nauru for years. *Guardian Australia’s Nauru Files 2016* contain over 2,000 reports of assault, self-harm, abuse and sexual assault of children.
- At least 14 people died in offshore detentions: by suicide, murder and medical neglect. Inadequate medical care has resulted in long-term disability in many others.

- The 2023 [Richardson Review](#) into the management of offshore processing disclosed a gross lack of due diligence in awarding lucrative contracts to Canstruct and MTC to operate Nauru Detention Centre. MTC is currently on a \$420 million contract -MTC's parent company in the USA has a history of negligence leading to death and rape of inmates, criminal charges of fraud and accusations of money laundering.
- Offshore processing costs, on average, over \$2 billion per year; it is costing more than \$573,000 per person per year. In contrast, a person living in Australia on a Bridging Visa would cost the Government just over \$10,000 a year.

### **WHAT WE SHOULD BE DOING INSTEAD**

As a wealthy developed country with expertise in resettling refugees, Australia has the capacity and responsibility to support people seeking safety from war and persecution. It is time for Australia to move from responsibility-shifting to responsibility-sharing in addressing the needs of people needing protection. This can be done by better resourcing the UNHCR, and supporting the development of resettlement programs and complementary pathways in other countries in the Asia Pacific region.

The Albanese Government has the opportunity to restore integrity to Australia's refugee policy - which is what it promised on taking government in 2022. Essential to this is ending Australia's offshore detention regime and settlement bans, and the restoration of integrity, transparency and accountability in the treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum. Specifically, we are calling on the government to:

- Stop punishing refugees who arrived by boat. Seeking asylum is not a crime.
- End the ban on resettlement for refugees who arrived by boat.
- Urgently reinstate adequate supports for the men in PNG while the situation is resolved for all of them. Support needs to include appropriate medical and psychiatric care as well as oversight to ensure practical support and resettlement services are adequate.
- Immediately medevac all the seriously ill men in PNG to Australia for medical care and mental health support they so urgently need.
- Offer all those remaining the option of being transferred to Australia while awaiting resettlement.
- Transfer everyone being held on Nauru to Australia, for fair and efficient processing of their claims for protection.
- Ensure that all refugees and asylum seekers living in the Australian community have the right to work, to study and have access to adequate housing, income support and medical care.
- Honor the commitments Australia made at the December 2023 Global Refugee Forum to increase our humanitarian program and support other countries in developing their refugee resettlement capacity.

#### Sources:

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/mar/17/the-wait-is-too-long-the-refugees-left-in-png-after-a-decade-in-australias-offshore-detention>

4 July 2024 [Australia to strike new funding deal with Papua New Guinea to manage transferred asylum seekers | Australian immigration and asylum | The Guardian](#)

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/operation-sovereign-borders-offshore-detention-statistics/>

<https://theconversation.com/our-cruel-and-costly-offshore-processing-system-was-a-failure-we-have-a-better-solution-on-asylum-policy-210378>

Richardson Report on offshore processing - Oct 2023 <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-publications/reviews-and-inquiries/departmental-reviews/review-regional-processing-contracts-department-home-affairs>

The Nauru files documented over 2000 reports on abuse <https://www.theguardian.com/news/series/nauru-files>

## Who to write to:

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- Your **local MP** (if Labor) and all of the Federal Labor Senators in your state
  - The Prime Minister, **Anthony Albanese** Contact Form: <https://www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm>
  - Minister for Home Affairs, **Clare O’Neil**  
Email: [Clare.ONeil.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Clare.ONeil.MP@aph.gov.au)  
Or contact form:  
<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-and-support/departmental-forms/online-forms/contact-the-minister>
  - Minister for Immigration, **Andrew Giles**  
Email: [Andrew.Giles.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Giles.MP@aph.gov.au)  
Or contact form:  
<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-and-support/departmental-forms/online-forms/contact-the-minister>
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## Addresses for letters:

### Canberra Postal Address for all SENATORS

PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

### Canberra Postal Address for all MPs

PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

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Find **electorate** postal and email addresses for your local Labor MP here:

[https://www.aph.gov.au/senators\\_and\\_members/members](https://www.aph.gov.au/senators_and_members/members)

**Email addresses for ACT Labor senators - copy and paste into “TO” section of your email:**

[senator.katy.gallagher@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.katy.gallagher@aph.gov.au);

**Email addresses for NSW Labor senators - copy and paste into “TO” section of your email:**

[senator.ayres@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.ayres@aph.gov.au); [senator.mcallister@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.mcallister@aph.gov.au); [senator.oneill@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.oneill@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.sheldon@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.sheldon@aph.gov.au);

**Email addresses for all NT Labor senator - copy and paste into “TO” section of your email:**

[Senator.McCarthy@aph.gov.au](mailto:Senator.McCarthy@aph.gov.au);

**Email addresses for Queensland Labor senators - copy and paste into “TO” section of your email:**

[senator.chisholm@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.chisholm@aph.gov.au); [senator.green@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.green@aph.gov.au); [senator.watt@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.watt@aph.gov.au)

**Email addresses for SA Labor senators - copy and paste into “TO” section of your email:**

[senator.farrell@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.farrell@aph.gov.au); [senator.grogan@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.grogan@aph.gov.au); [senator.marielle.smith@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.marielle.smith@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.wong@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.wong@aph.gov.au)

**Email addresses for Tasmania Labor senators - copy and paste into “TO” section of your email:**

[senator.bilyk@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.bilyk@aph.gov.au); [senator.carol.brown@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.carol.brown@aph.gov.au); [senator.polley@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.polley@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.urquhart@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.urquhart@aph.gov.au);

**Email addresses for Victorian Labor senators - copy and paste into “TO” section of your email:**

[senator.cicccone@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.cicccone@aph.gov.au); [senator.stewart@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.stewart@aph.gov.au); [senator.walsh@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.walsh@aph.gov.au)

**Email addresses for WA Labor senators - copy and paste into “TO” section of your email:**

[senator.ghosh@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.ghosh@aph.gov.au); [senator.lines@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.lines@aph.gov.au); [Senator.Payman@aph.gov.au](mailto:Senator.Payman@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.pratt@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.pratt@aph.gov.au); [senator.sterle@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.sterle@aph.gov.au)

NOTE: When sending emails be sure to **include** your NAME and ADDRESS

The Subject line could be: **11 Years of Trauma - 11 Years Too Long ENOUGH is ENOUGH**

**SAMPLE LETTER**    *Feel free to change to use your own words and highlight particular points.*

Dear

I write as we approach the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's declaration that asylum seekers arriving by boat would never be allowed to settle permanently in Australia.

Australia has detained over 3,200 people in offshore detention since 2013, at a cost to the nation of about \$14 billion. In 2024 there are still around 50 refugees and asylum seekers trapped in PNG. Some are awaiting resettlement in PNG, NZ or Canada; but many have no resettlement option. Around one thousand men, women and children, previously held offshore, now live in the Australian community with no permanent resettlement solution. Many are living in poverty, entirely dependent on already overstretched charities. Too many people still suffer, mentally and physically, from years of abuse and neglect in immigration detention.

Upon winning government in 2022, Labor promised a return to fair and compassionate treatment of refugees. It is disappointing, therefore, that the Albanese Government is continuing the practices of the former Coalition Government's Operation Sovereign Borders, a system that has cruelty at its core, inflicting untold damage to the people subject to it, and which continues to be unjustifiably expensive to the Australian taxpayer. It is even more distressing to witness the cycle beginning again on Nauru. It is time to stop the cruelty and end the suffering.

I therefore call on the Albanese Government to:

- Stop punishing refugees who arrived by boat. Seeking asylum is not a crime.
- End the ban on resettlement for refugees who arrived by boat.
- Urgently reinstate adequate supports for the men in PNG while the situation is resolved for all of them. Support needs to include appropriate medical and psychiatric care as well as oversight to ensure practical support and resettlement services are adequate.
- Immediately medevac all the seriously ill men in PNG to Australia for medical care and mental health support they so urgently need.
- Offer all those remaining the option of being transferred to Australia while awaiting resettlement.
- Transfer everyone being held on Nauru to Australia for fair and efficient processing of their claims for protection.
- Ensure that all refugees and asylum seekers living in the Australian community have the right to work, to study and have access to adequate housing, income support and medical care.
- Honor the commitments Australia made at the December 2023 Global Refugee Forum to increase our humanitarian program and support other countries in developing their refugee resettlement capacity.

Looking forward to your immediate attention to these matters.

Yours sincerely