

August 2024

**There are two urgent letters in August**

- Permanent visas for refugees
- Immediate evacuation of people critically ill on PNG

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)

# More than 11 Years of Uncertainty and Trauma must end

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## It is important to write about these 2 issues now – both are urgent

1. People denied refugee protection under the Fast Track process are holding 24/7 protests in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane – we need to let the Minister know we support their call for permanent visas. Over 8,000 people have had their claims for protection rejected under the fast-track assessment process. They have been living here in our communities on short term bridging visas, with limited or no rights to work, education or financial support.
2. In Port Moresby: Approximately 50 refugees and asylum seekers are still trapped in PNG. These men are the responsibility of the Australian Government which transported them there 11 years ago. Many are seriously ill, and do not have access to adequate medical care.

Please write to the Minister calling for urgent medical evaluation. See sample letter below.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1. Call for Permanent Visas for those denied protection under Fast track

People who have been in limbo on short term bridging visas for more than 11 years here in Australia are protesting to draw attention to the need for certainty and safe futures. In Melbourne the 24/7 protest at the Home Affairs office is now in the second month, and the Sydney protest at Minister Burke's office commenced on 6 August. In Brisbane a protest will begin on 19 August.

The Fast Track Assessment Process for determining refugee status was introduced by the Coalition Government in 2014. It drastically altered the refugee determination process for people who arrived by boat from 2012. Fast Track gave very short timeframes for lodging applications without the necessary legal supports, interpreters, etc. It also removed the possibility of a merits review if claims were rejected. In opposition, the ALP acknowledged that the Fast Track System does not provide a fair, thorough and robust assessment process for persons seeking protection, and that a merits review process is needed. But so far, no action has been taken to on behalf of those impacted by unfair decisions.

It is understood that nearly 8,000 people have had their claims for protection rejected under the fast-track assessment process.

For more than 10 years they have been in limbo, with no secure visa status and no permanent resettlement solution. Trapped in this state of uncertainty and with limited rights, many of these people are unable to support themselves and their families. Anxiety and depression are common, and people are at risk of suicide.

### 2. Health crisis for refugees abandoned in PNG

The report released by ASRC on 19 July 2024 "*Health Crisis in Offshore Detention*" [https://asrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ASRCreport\\_Healthcrisisinoffshoredetention\\_July2024.pdf](https://asrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ASRCreport_Healthcrisisinoffshoredetention_July2024.pdf) provides a comprehensive summary of the serious harm that is done to the mental and physical health of refugees and people seeking asylum by Australia's offshore processing and detention regime.

There are still approximately 50 refugees and people seeking asylum remaining in PNG. They have been trapped there for 11 years after having been sent there by the Australian Government.

Leaving them in PNG is actively harming their mental and physical health.

The deterioration in their health is making it more difficult for them to be resettled.

- Some in PNG are currently too ill to participate in any resettlement process.

- The Australian Government needs to act.

This situation can be resolved by bringing them to Australia so that they are safe and can receive the support and medical care that they require.

- All refugees and people seeking asylum who are still in PNG should be offered the option of being transferred to Australia while awaiting resettlement.
- This was successfully done in 2023 for those who had been trapped on Nauru for ten years, and it can be done for those in PNG.
- Those who are seriously ill in PNG need urgent transfer to Australia for medical care

## Who to write to:

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- Your **local MP** (if Labor) and all of the Federal Labor Senators in your state [contact details of all MPs and Senators here](#) *this list can be sorted by state and political party - note: 2 worksheets (MPs and Senators)*
  - The Prime Minister, **Anthony Albanese** Contact Form: <https://www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm>
  - The Hon Tony Burke, Minister for Home Affairs <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-and-support/departmental-forms/online-forms/contact-the-minister>
  - The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP, Assistant Minister for Immigration [matt.thistlethwaite.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:matt.thistlethwaite.mp@aph.gov.au)
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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.ciccione@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.ciccione@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

## SAMPLE LETTERS

**SAMPLE LETTER 1 re Fast Track and Permanent Visas** *Please change to use your own words and highlight particular points. Please write urgently to Minister Burke, the PM and others in support of the refugees 24/7 protest in Melbourne and Sydney.* \*There is also a postcard in email format that you can send [Postcard for politicians re unfair Fast Track process - email format](#)

Dear Minister Burke

You may have heard that people denied protection under FastTrack have established a 24/7 protest outside the Home Affairs office in a freezing Melbourne winter - this protest commenced on 15 July and is continuing with support from many concerned community members. On 6 August people similarly denied protection in Sydney commenced a similar protest at your office. A further protest action is planned in Brisbane.

After 12 long years of uncertainty these people need to know that they and their families, and the thousands they represent, can live safely and permanently in Australia. As you know, the Fast Track process was introduced by the Abbott Government to fail people seeking asylum – and it has. Now, 12 years later, over 8,000 people still do not have permanent visas - they have been denied a fair assessment of their claims for refugee protection. Despite these difficulties, they are making a contribution and raising their children as young Australians. These people have been caught in a flawed system and rightly have no confidence in decisions received about their refugee claims:

- They are issued short term bridging visas, some without the right to work and many endure long periods without access to Medicare.
- They live with the heartache and anxiety of being separated for years from loved ones who are still in situations of great uncertainty or danger.

Most young people on a bridging visa cannot study at university, even though they have done all their schooling in Australia.

- None can access the safety net of Centrelink supports. Increasing numbers of people are at risk of homelessness.

In opposition, Labor acknowledged that the Fast Track process was flawed and unfair. The 2023 ALP Policy Platform states: *“The assessment and review of protection claims will be underpinned by robust, efficient and transparent processes that ensure fair and consistent outcomes, including access to review which allows for the consideration of additional material, and access to independent advice. The highest priority will be allocated to action the orderly and fair resolution of the backlog of cases subjected to the fast-track assessment process.”*

I urge the Labor Government to urgently provide a robust merits review process for all those who have been denied protection under Fast Track. The Government should also allow them to apply for any other permanent visa where they meet the requirements. Please give this matter your priority attention.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

(Address)

**SAMPLE LETTER 2 – re situation in PNG** *Please change to use your own words and highlight particular points.*

Dear

I am writing to urge you to take immediate action to bring the critically ill refugees still in Port Moresby to Australia for urgently needed mental health and medical care.

It is abhorrent that Australia has abandoned these men in PNG, having held them in appalling detention conditions for many years, and now subjecting them to impoverishment and allowing them to become critically ill.

I feel deep shame that the Australian government has orchestrated this suffering.

Already at least 14 people have died as a direct result of the Offshore regime – are you willing to allow more deaths?

Please take immediate action to medevac those who are seriously ill to Australia for treatment.

Please ensure that those remaining in PNG have the means to pay for food and medical care and other essentials. I understand that concerned members of the Australian community have raised over \$150,000 to provide sustenance to the 50 or so refugees and people seeking asylum in PNG – this is another mark for shame for the Labor Government. Having banished these people who sought our protection to PNG more than 11 years ago, Australia is responsible for their welfare, and to find safe and durable resettlement options for them.

I hope to see that you and your Labor colleagues take immediate action to for those who are desperately ill and find humane and just options for those still in PNG who have no pathway to safe resettlement. Please do not allow 11 years to become 12 years too long – will this be Labor's legacy?

Yours sincerely