

Australia is still responsible for the refugees abandoned in 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 Senator and contact form for Minister and Prime Minister
- Sample letter and/or 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)

**Why it’s important to write about this issue (again)**

- This topic has been covered in a recent kit, but the situation has become more dire with the eviction notices. We want to make sure that the Government gets the message loud and clear. The forgotten refugees in PNG are Australia’s responsibility
- In July 2024, the Albanese Government was apparently preparing to negotiate a financial agreement with the PNG Government to support asylum seekers after PNG threatened to send them back to Australia. It is not known whether this deal was finalized and since the change of cabinet portfolios no further light has been thrown on this situation. In fact, according to a recent communique from the Home Office, “The Australian Government does not have any role in the ongoing management of, or service delivery arrangements for, individual remaining in PNG”
- Six families were served an eviction notice on 12 September. This eviction notice follows a gradual withdrawal of other services such as health care, case management, security and transport
- We need to write urgently and now – to demand an explanation and more importantly, to keep up the pressure to bring them to Australia for medical treatment, to await resettlement in a third country or to provide a pathway to permanency here. The irony is that most of these people have been deemed bona fide refugees. AUSTRALIA HAS DONE NOTHING IN THE FACE OF THIS SUFFERING. AUSTRALIA INCARCERATED THESE PEOPLE WHEN THEY CAME TO US FOR HELP. THEY ARE STILL AUSTRALIA’S RESPONSIBILITY.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- During the past 11 years, Australia's policy of offshore processing has caused at least 14 deaths and significant physical and mental harm to the thousands of refugees and people seeking asylum, who have been subjected to unimaginable cruelty in detention centres in Nauru (now reopened), Manus Island and Port Moresby (PNG).
- It has cost over 12 billion dollars and that cost is ongoing with the re-opening of Nauru plus the funding required to ensure the ongoing wellbeing of those still in PNG.
- Many refugees remain in PNG, without a clear path to resettlement, with chronic and deteriorating health conditions that remain inadequately addressed. Despite ending its offshore processing agreement with PNG in 2021, Australia is not fulfilling its responsibilities for the welfare of refugees and people seeking asylum transferred there by our government.

### Brief time-line fact sheet:

- 2013. Kevin Rudd decreed that no person seeking asylum in Australia – who arrived by boat – would ever be able to settle in Australia.
- Since 19 July 2013 around 3,000 people have been sent to offshore detention in PNG and Nauru.
- 2016/17. Manus Island Centre declared unlawful by PNG and closed. Most people then transferred to Port Moresby
- 2021. PM Scott Morrison announced the end of off-shore processing in PNG. He then struck a one off and secret deal to fund refugees and asylum seekers who were still in Port Moresby. In November 2023 it was announced that the funding was exhausted and that local services would no longer receive funding to provide for refugees.
- The men and their families remained in Port Moresby, relying on Australian charity. Over \$150,000 has been donated by concerned individuals since November 2023. However, it is understandably dwindling.
- Some are awaiting resettlement to New Zealand or Canada. But most are still there as resettlement is agonizingly slow - and some have no resettlement pathway.
- In July 2024 *The Guardian Australia* revealed that the Albanese Government was considering entering a [new financial agreement with PNG](#) after the PNG Government threatened to send the now destitute people to Australia
- In September 2024. *The Guardian Australia* revealed that the Albanese Government was considering entering into another financial agreement with PNG after that country threatened to send the now destitute people to Australia ([Ex-Manus Island detainees stranded in PNG threatened with eviction over unpaid rent | Australian immigration and asylum | The Guardian](#)). THE OUTCOME OF THIS IS UNKNOWN.

### Situation Now

- Refugees and their families continue to experience discrimination, violent attacks, thefts and home invasion.
- ASRC's Detention Rights Advocacy Program (DRAP) can confirm that the PNG refugees they are in regular contact with suffer physical health conditions and many suffer severe mental health conditions – some have chronic suicidal ideation and a history of suicide attempts.
- Many fear for their lives and the safety of their children and are too frightened to leave their accommodation.

# REFUGEE SECTOR LETTER KIT

October 2024



- Some refugees have been threatened with eviction (September 12 this year). They are at risk of homelessness. Others have been relocated to unsafe areas and are isolated.
- Without access to secure accommodation and security, people are at further risk of violent attacks
- This most recent eviction notice coincides with a withdrawal of basic services such as healthcare, education opportunities, case management, security and transport.
- Refugees and their children are facing imminent starvation. They are without money and food as financial allowances and food vouchers have ceased and parents are unable to provide formula and nappies for infant children
- The Australian Government remains silent.

## Sources

[Refugees in PNG threatened with eviction Sept 2024](#)

[ASRC report July 2024: CRUELTY BY DESIGN: Health Crisis in Offshore Detention](#)

[RCOA urges Minister to provide for the refugees still in PNG](#)

**EMAIL OR SEND LETTERS NOW:** Especially write to Labor MPs and Senators, and cross benchers

Find postal and email addresses for electoral offices MPs and Senators here: [contact list of all MPs and Senators here](#) or use search function on parliamentary website [https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators\\_and\\_Members](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members)

When sending emails remember to **include** your NAME and ADDRESS

Letters to PM and Ministers should be posted to PO Box 6022, Parliament House, Canberra 2600

## 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

**ACT Labor senator** - [senator.katy.gallagher@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.katy.gallagher@aph.gov.au);

**NSW Labor senators** - [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);

**NT Labor senator** [Senator.McCarthy@aph.gov.au](mailto:Senator.McCarthy@aph.gov.au);

**Queensland Labor senators:** [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)

**SA Labor senators:** [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)

**Tasmania Labor senators:** [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);

**Victorian Labor senators:** [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)

**WA Labor senators:** [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)

# REFUGEE SECTOR LETTER KIT

October 2024



## SAMPLE LETTER (this letter is provided as a guide – please use your own words)

Hon Tony Burke MP  
Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration and Multicultural Affairs  
PO Box 6022, Parliament House,  
Canberra 2600

Dear Minister

The situation of the refugees left in PNG worsens by the day. It reached crisis point months ago – years for some. I urge you to take immediate action to resolve this situation.

There are currently about 44 men, 18 partners and 34 children living in precarious circumstances. While some of these men are awaiting resettlement in New Zealand or Canada, they should have the option of evacuation to Australia for care and support while suitable resettlement is arranged. These victims of multiple traumas and worsening physical and psychiatric illnesses have experienced deteriorating health in tandem with limited medical care only safely accessed by taxis they cannot afford. There is no free psychiatric care available at all.

In July this year, the ASRC published [CRUELTY BY DESIGN](#), a report documenting the immense burden of physical and mental illness carried by the refugees Australia abandoned in PNG. Every single one of the refugees the ASRC was in contact with has a medical or psychiatric condition in need of treatment. Their lives are at risk. Anxiety and depression are rife, with many reporting suicidal thoughts.

The charitable contributions on which these people have been reliant are dwindling while Australia continues to shirk responsibility for providing the funds required to support the ongoing service delivery arrangements for them. Eviction is the last straw in a long line of service withdrawals over the last 12 months. Six families, including children, received notice on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024 for immediate vacation of their premises. Their situation is unknown. Can the Minister verify whether there has been intervention to prevent them becoming homeless and explain why they are in this vulnerable position – without food, rent, and medical care? On 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024, *The Guardian* reported then Minister of Home Affairs, Claire O’Neill, was negotiating an agreement with PNG to provide funds to support and process the refugees. There has been no mention of this since. When will Australia provide these funds which are so necessary for the well-being of the refugees abandoned in PNG?

Unfortunately, the refugees in PNG have been waiting 11 years for their asylum applications to be processed, and resettlement to be arranged. Some are ineligible for resettlement and many are *too ill* to participate in the resettlement process at all.

Australia is not fulfilling its responsibilities for the welfare of refugees and people seeking asylum transferred to PNG by our government. I ask you to immediately provide medical evacuation to Australia for those in urgent need. The remainder need the option to come onshore to reside in safety in the community with medical and financial support while their resettlement is arranged, or they are offered permanent visas here.

As Minister of Home Affairs, this is your responsibility. As a humanitarian nation, and a signatory of the Refugee Convention, this is Australia’s duty.

Yours sincerely

(Name)  
(Address)