



**THE HON DAVID COLEMAN MP
MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND
MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS**

Ref No: MC18-060396

Sister Libby Rogerson
Catholic Religious Australia (CRA)
PO Box 1518
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

Dear Sister Rogerson

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 September 2018 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, concerning children and families living on Nauru under the Australian Government's regional processing arrangements. Your correspondence has been referred to me as the matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities.

The Australian Government supports the Government of Nauru to protect these children and meet their daily health and welfare needs.

The Department of Home Affairs, which manages Australia's border protection arrangements, cooperates transparently with its stakeholders in regional processing arrangements. To this end, it engages with international and domestic independent oversight bodies including the United Nations Human Rights Commission, International Committee of the Red Cross, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Commonwealth Ombudsman and independent advisors. Each of these bodies has visited Nauru over several years to provide advice and support to the Government of Nauru.

The Nauruan Government's contracted health and welfare service providers also assist with capacity building in Nauru through the provision of advice, training, equipment and infrastructure developments.

The Australian Border Force (ABF) has mandatory reporting requirements of any child protection incident. Where the ABF is aware of an incident they are reported to the Government of Nauru Child Protection Unit, who work closely with the Nauruan Police Force. The Australian Federal Police has also supported the Nauruan Police Force in capability building over several years.

A range of care, welfare and support arrangements are in place to provide for the needs of children and young people. The Government of Nauru has contracted service providers to provide age-appropriate health, education, recreational, wellbeing and cultural services and activities to children and families living under regional processing arrangements.

Health professionals are available on Nauru to support the health and welfare, including mental health of refugees and asylum seekers in Nauru. Individuals can access counselling and psychiatric services as needed. In addition to its significant investment in health services in Nauru, the Department has established a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), facilitated through the health service provider in Nauru, International Health and Medical Services. CAMHS provides child mental health services using an outpatient/outreach model.

A person's treating doctor reports the unmet clinical needs of people living in Nauru under regional processing arrangements to the Department, which then considers whether Australia can bring medical specialists, equipment or expertise to Nauru to conduct further assessments or provide required medical treatment.

Where Nauruan contracted health services cannot deliver a necessary healthcare treatment to refugees or asylum seekers living in Nauru, the Australian Government considers treatment options available in Taiwan and Papua New Guinea or at times in Australia. The person's treating clinician refers the person to the Department and a Medical Officer of the Commonwealth provides clinical advice to the Department. Individuals must consent to the ABF transferring them from Nauru to another location for medical treatment.

Individuals who travel to Australia for a temporary purpose such as medical treatment, under existing provisions in the *Migration Act 1958*, must return to a regional processing country once the purpose for their stay in Australia is no longer required.

Refugees and transferees in Nauru and are not subject to detention and are free to move about the community while they await United States resettlement processing, consider other settlement options or voluntarily return home.

Child wellbeing is extremely important and a very sensitive issue and I appreciate your efforts to communicate your concern about the children and families living in Nauru under regional processing arrangements. However, the Australian Government remains committed to strong border protection policies, including regional processing. These policies have successfully dismantled the people smuggling business model and prevented loss of life in and near our territorial waters. The Australian Government will continue to support the Government of Nauru in its provision of regional processing services.

Thank you for bringing the concerns of Catholic Religious Australia to my attention.

Yours sincerely



David Coleman

6 / 12 / 2018