



THE HON STEVE IRONS MP
ASSISTANT MINISTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Reference: MC18-128812

Sister Libby Rogerson IBVM
Catholic Religious Australia
PO Box 1518
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

Dear Sister Libby

Thank you for your letter dated 28 September 2018 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP regarding recent changes to the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) programme. The Prime Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf.

The SRSS program provides support for certain non-citizens who are in the Australian community temporarily while their immigration status is being determined. The SRSS program provides short-term, tailored support to individuals who are unable to support themselves while they engage with the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) to resolve their immigration status.

The Commonwealth Government's position in relation to the SRSS program has not changed, and remains consistent with the expectations of the broader Australian community. Individuals on a bridging visa with work rights, and who have the capacity to work, are expected to support themselves while their immigration status is being resolved. People who have capacity to work are therefore referred to the Department of Jobs and Small Business' Jobactive program and other support services as required.

However, people who need assistance to overcome specific barriers to employment, or to resolve their immigration status, may continue to receive short-term support if they are actively engaged with the Department. This includes individuals with a serious mental or physical health condition, a disability or a cognitive impairment, which precludes them from working.

Further, support for the small number of individuals that do not have work rights, or are barred from applying for a Bridging Visa E, will continue to be delivered under the SRSS program.

The Government will continue to regularly review and update the SRSS program to ensure it aligns to community standards and continues to support status resolution outcomes.

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.

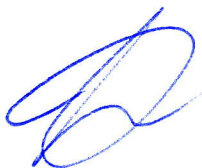
Individuals who travel to Australia for a temporary purpose such as medical treatment, under existing provisions in the *Migration Act 1958*, must return to a regional processing country once the purpose for their stay in Australia is no longer required.

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