



The Hon Bill Shorten  
Leader of the Opposition  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT

7<sup>th</sup> October 2018

I write on behalf of the Justice Committee of Catholic Religious Australia (CRA). CRA represents approximately 5,500 Catholic religious, women and men, throughout the nation, as well as many thousands of people working in organisations run by religious institutes. Our members and their lay colleagues work in education, health care and social services. We work with First Australians, refugees and asylum seekers, people surviving on the margins and many others in need of assistance. The members of CRA and their colleagues, many of whom work on a daily basis with asylum seekers and refugees, are committed to a humane, compassionate and generous treatment of asylum seekers.

We join our voices with the hundreds of individuals and groups calling for the Federal Government and Opposition to end the cruel and destructive incarceration of people, especially children in detention centres on Nauru and Manus Islands. The ill- treatment of these innocent people contravenes not only the Declaration of Human Rights but also the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The oft repeated excuse that your harsh policies are meant to stop drownings at sea holds little weight when you then expose them to serious physical and mental illness and even death in the camps.

Morally, and practically, Australia cannot continue to keep people imprisoned without hope, at huge cost, until all of them are completely destroyed mentally and physically. We have reached the depths of, at best insensitivity and at worst of cruelty, when we have to appeal to the courts to bring seriously ill children to Australia for treatment.

We plead with you to join in a bi-partisan agreement to stop this cruelty, change your policies and give these refugees and asylum seekers the respect their dignity and law demands by immediately releasing them from their torment.

Yours sincerely

*M M Hinchey*

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Social Justice Committee  
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