

The Migration Amendment (Evacuation to Safety) Bill 2023

Submission

I am writing to support the Migration Amendment (Evacuation to Safety) Bill 2023.

The bill would allow roughly 150 people who are still in Nauru and PNG to temporarily live in the community in Australia until they are resettled to a third country, as long as there have been no adverse security assessments made against them. Those who are evacuated would also be provided with the medical care they need.

This bill is a compassionate and practical solution to the ongoing crisis of offshore detention. It will ensure that people seeking asylum are treated with dignity, respect, and given the chance to rebuild their lives in safety and freedom.

The former government's decision to delay accepting New Zealand's offer to resettle 150 refugees per year means that people abandoned in PNG and Nauru have now endured almost a decade of unjust, indefinite detention. Transfers to NZ have also been incredibly slow. After a decade of delay, the situation is critical.

The Bill is a sensible solution that ensures refugees receive the safety and opportunity to rebuild their lives that they need and deserve.

It will also bring Australia closer towards complying with our international humanitarian obligations – until now, we have in effect been deliberately subjecting people to harm (i.e. torture) in order to send a message to other potential seekers of asylum.

Please support the passage of this Bill, to bring an end to a very ugly chapter in our history.

Shawn Whelan