



Committee Secretary  
Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee  
Department of the Senate  
via: [legcon.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:legcon.sen@aph.gov.au)

**24 February 2023**

Dear Committee Secretary.

**Re: Inquiry into the Migration Amendment (Evacuation to Safety) Bill 2023**

The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Inquiry into the Migration Amendment (Evacuation to Safety) Bill 2023 ('the Inquiry'). As a national alliance that advocates for the fair and humane treatment of people seeking asylum, we strongly support the introduction of this Bill.

Co-convened by Jesuit Social Services and Jesuit Refugee Service Australia, CAPSA works alongside Catholic schools, parishes, organisations and individuals to change hearts and minds so that people seeking asylum can find safety and welcome in Australia.

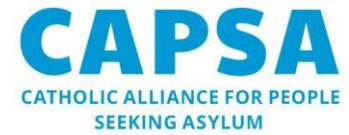
We strongly support this Bill as it compels the Government to offer transfer to Australia to all persons subject to offshore processing still in Papua New Guinea (PNG) or Nauru within one month of the commencement of the Bill.

It has been well established that Australia's offshore processing system, the most recent iteration of which has been maintained by successive Federal Governments, has caused extreme and ongoing damage to the refugees and people seeking asylum who have been subject to its cruelty.

We welcome the Bill's clear emphasis on a swift transfer from offshore detention to community detention in Australia (within 30 days) for all those who do not have an adverse security assessment. Further, the Bill appears to prioritise transparency and accountability - particularly by requiring the minister to report to parliament about anyone who accepts the offer to be brought to Australia, but is not brought within seven days of accepting.

Without minimising our strong support of the Bill, we note that a more compassionate approach would provide an option for the permanent resettlement in Australia of people transferred from PNG and Nauru for whom relocation to a third country would pose a clear risk of further harm. Additionally, we would welcome further detail regarding the ineligibility under the Bill for the transfer to Australia of people who are subject to an adverse security assessment. The Bill does not provide for such people to be given information regarding the basis upon which a determination has been made, nor an avenue to contest a determination.

Further, we note that the Bill only provides for medical and psychiatric support once people are brought to Australia. We emphasise the critical importance of holistic support, including legal and counselling support (insofar as it is not covered by psychiatric support) being provided to people who are transferred.



It is absolutely critical to the lives, wellbeing and welfare of the 150 individuals remaining on PNG and Nauru, that this Bill is passed through Parliament and enacted immediately.

We appreciate the Committee receiving our submission to the Inquiry into the Migration Amendment (Evacuation to Safety) Bill 2023. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss the points raised with you further.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Edwards, CEO, Jesuit Social  
Services:

Tamara Domicelj – Country Director, Jesuit Refugee Service  
Australia