



St Vincent de Paul Society
NATIONAL COUNCIL *good works*

ABN: 50 748 098 845

National Council of Australia Inc
Units 4-5
22 Thesiger Court
Deakin ACT 2600
PO Box 243
Deakin West ACT 2600
Telephone: (02) 6202 1200
Facsimile: (02) 6285 0159
Website: www.vinnies.org.au

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St Vincent de Paul Society applauds parliamentary motion to resettle refugees from Manus and Nauru

The St Vincent de Paul Society has welcomed a motion in the ACT Legislative Assembly declaring the ACT Government is willing and ready to settle and support refugees and asylum seekers from Manus and Nauru in Canberra as part of a national program of resettlement.

The motion, which is to be debated in the ACT Legislative Assembly today, condemns the “inhumane and damaging conditions” on Manus and Nauru, and calls for the Federal Government’s “damaging, cruel and inhumane policy to end”.

It comes just a week after the Liberal Federal MP Russell Broadbent called on his own party to reverse their policy and “act to resolve the situation of people in long-term offshore detention”.

“This motion sends a clear message to the Federal Government that Australia’s damaging, cruel and inhumane policy of offshore processing must end”, said Dr John Falzon, CEO of the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council.

“It is time the Australian Government abandoned the practice of offshore punishment and honoured its international obligations to people seeking a safe place to call home,” said Dr Falzon.

Several members of the Society have visited Manus Island in recent months and witnessed the deterioration in conditions, growing fear and desperation, and escalation in violence and threats directed toward refugees and asylum seekers.

“Messages from the terrified men on Manus paint an alarming picture and we hold grave fears about their safety,” said Dr Falzon.

“The Australia Government has said the processing centre will close by the end of October, but the men are being coerced out of the regional processing centre with nowhere to go, and are afraid of being attacked or left in limbo forever in a place where they have little access to food, medical support and other basic services.

“After four years of fear and violence, substantiated cases of sexual abuse and seven deaths, the only humane and responsible option is to evacuate every man, women and child held on Nauru and Manus to safety. Otherwise, further tragedy is inevitable,” said Dr Falzon.

MEDIA CONTACT: For media enquiries please call 0400 845 492 or (02) 6202 1200.