



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION
AND BORDER PROTECTION**

Ref No: MS15-000025

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair of the Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Jensen

Pursuant to Standing Order 209(b), relating to referring a petition to a Minister for response, please find response to Petition Number 965/1436.

This petition of members of the Bathurst Catholic Diocese was submitted by the Standing Committee on Petitions for a response from the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, in writing, on 20 October 2014:

The petition raises concerns about Australia's asylum seeker policy.

Under the previous government's policies the number of illegal maritime arrivals to Australia significantly increased. This increase has undermined the integrity of Australia's migration and humanitarian programmes and threatens Australia's territorial sovereignty.

Offshore processing and settlement deters people from risking their lives in the hands of people smugglers in an attempt to enter Australia without a visa. The denial of permanent settlement in Australia eliminates a product for people smugglers to sell. The government's offshore processing policy gives asylum seekers the opportunity to have their protection claims assessed in accordance with the Refugees Convention. If found to be a refugee, they will be settled in a third country and provided with support to establish a new life.

Current government policy is yielding positive results, with one arrival in 2014 and none to date in 2015. To date, 4400 extra places have been allocated to Iraq and Syria this programme year and an additional 4500 will be allocated in the next 3 years in the Humanitarian Programme to be managed and provided in an orderly process to those who apply through the proper channels.

Yours sincerely

PETER DUTTON

4/6/15