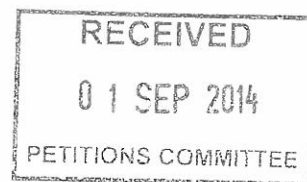




The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Minister for Immigration and Border Protection



Reference: 1407/00075

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair of the Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Jensen

Petition regarding offshore processing of asylum seekers

Thank you for your letter of 23 June 2014 concerning a petition recently submitted for consideration by the Standing Committee on Petitions regarding offshore processing of asylum seekers.

The Australian Government announced that under Operation Sovereign Borders, all illegal maritime arrivals entering Australian waters by boat without a visa will be liable for offshore processing and resettlement in Nauru or Papua New Guinea (PNG). This is one of the government's suite of measures intended to deter people smugglers by denying them a product to sell to often vulnerable people.

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 and provided with support to establish a new life.

Illegal maritime arrivals that are transferred to Nauru and PNG have their claim for protection assessed under Nauruan or PNG law. Both Nauru and PNG are signatories to the *1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, and its 1967 Protocol. They have a robust Refugee Determination process which has been developed with due regard to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Refugee Determination principles and guidelines.

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection has contracted service providers with the expertise to deliver a range of services to transferees, including health, catering and cleaning services, programmes and activities, and education to ensure the well-being of transferees.

The government continues to work cooperatively with the governments of Nauru and PNG in relation to all aspects of offshore processing, and to ensure appropriate arrangements and supports are in place to meet transferees' needs.

Thank you for writing in on this matter. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

The Hon Scott Morrison MP

Minister for Immigration and Border Protection

26/8/2014