

## Submission by the Amnesty International Bendigo Group

### Inquiry into offshore processing and resettlement arrangements

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My name is Jan Govett of Bendigo, Victoria, and I write on behalf of Amnesty International Bendigo Group, a group with 200 members/supporters.

We are contacting the committee regarding Australia's processing and resettlement arrangements on Nauru / Papua New Guinea.

Bendigo Amnesty is part of a community that values the many refugees who have resettled here. Our community has various refugee groups dedicated to assisting and supporting refugees - Bendigo Community Health, Rural Australians for Refugees, and Bendigo Amnesty being just three examples.

In working with refugees we have come to recognize the devastating trauma that people experience in being forced to flee, frequently alone, to face an uncertain and often dangerous future.

In consigning such vulnerable people to Australia's offshore processing and resettlement centres on Nauru and in PNG, Australia exacerbates this already extensive trauma.

For more than 13 years we have seen **the damage done to vulnerable people** by Australian offshore detention, without any proven benefit to Australia. Over the years, the harmful effect of offshore detention is well-documented - deaths, life-threatening medical neglect, and a systemic pattern of sexual abuse. Just last year, the UN Human Rights Committee found that Australia was responsible for violations of human rights and called on the Government to offer compensation.

We understand that the Inquiry Committee will have particular reference to offshore processing and resettlement arrangements since 2022. However, it is not possible to fully understand these policies without considering the harm caused by offshore processing over more than a decade. Past policies have directly shaped the policies of today.

While people continue to suffer, **the cost to the Australian taxpayer is exorbitant** - regularly costing more than \$1 billion a year. The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Melbourne has released data showing that Australia's offshore processing regime has cost taxpayers over \$13 billion.

In contrast, in Bendigo we see our community wrap its arms around vulnerable people, providing much needed personal support until people are able to take their place as active and contributing members of society. We are proud of our resettlement achievements.

We believe that people seeking asylum in Australia, **should live in Australia** while their claims are processed.

**Processing of claims and the care of people** should not be outsourced, but done ... **by Australia ... in Australia.**

We are grateful to the committee for accepting our submission, in which I have outlined our concerns with Australia's offshore processing and resettlement arrangements on Nauru and in Papua New Guinea.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Jan Govett, Convener, Amnesty International, Bendigo Group  
28<sup>th</sup> January 2026