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Date 13 February 2026

SUBMISSION OF ELIZABETH MEAD

INQUIRY INTO OFFSHORE PROCESSING AND RESETTLEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

My name is Elizabeth Mead of Griffith NSW. I represent the members of Rural Australians for Refugees Griffith.

None of our members has lived experience of offshore processing and resettlement arrangements but we have lived through a time identified under both Coalition and Labour Governments where inhumane policies and practices in relation to those seeking asylum came to be accepted by many in the community as “normal”.

What we have to say is very general. We have no facts or figures in relation to “Australia’s arrangements since 2022 with the Republic of Nauru, Papua New Guinea and other countries for offshore processing and resettlement programs”, but those running these programs have all that information and can provide it to the Inquiry.

We firmly believe however, in the name of human rights, human dignity and on economic grounds that offshore detention and processing should be abandoned and that those seeking asylum in Australia should be brought here for processing and resettlement.

This brief submission touches on Terms of Reference (a) (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) but mainly addresses (a) (v)

CONCERNS OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

In late January Australia’s human rights record was scrutinised by the UN Human Rights Council for the fourth time. 160 organisations submitted a joint NGO report calling on the Australian Government to take action in six identified areas. One of these calls on the Australian Government to **“END THE UNJUST POLICIES AFFECTING PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM”**. The experiences of those who were incarcerated on Nauru have been well documented. We refer in particular to the living conditions, the dehumanising practices employed by security personnel, the loss of hope, the resultant lifelong mental health issues detainees suffer, the self harm and the suicides.

Australian representatives have the temerity to question other countries about what they view to be violations of human rights yet Australia is just as guilty of human rights violations.

EXTREMELY NEGATIVE PUBLICITY ABOUT THE RE-OPENING OF NAURU AND THE SECRETIVE NATURE OF AUSTRALIA’S ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF NAURU AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

It would appear few know what specific arrangements Australia has made with Nauru or with Papua New Guinea in relation to resettlement. We know about the \$408 million Nauru has been paid up front and the commitment to pay another \$70 million per year for the next 30 years so those six refugees living lawfully in Australia who were picked up, detained and deported to Nauru could be given 30 year visas issued by Nauru. There are up to another 353 on the government’s short list for deportation.

The same could be said of the millions of dollars spent several years ago to provide for resettlement in a third country. The only beneficiaries to those schemes appear to be the governments of the countries involved.

EXTREMELY NEGATIVE PUBLICITY ABOUT THE COSTS OF DETAINING THOSE SEEKING ASYLUM ON NAURU

The costs for maintaining the detention facility on Nauru are not widely known. It is extremely expensive to detain a person in prison in Australia; much more expensive to detain those seeking asylum on Nauru. Taxpayers have the right to know how much more it costs to detain a person on Nauru rather than in Australia and why our Government persists with the policy of offshore detention, processing and resettlement.

In a time when the Government is trying to find savings in all departments, the costs to keep the detention facility on Nauru open cannot be supported.

EXTREMELY NEGATIVE PUBLICITY ABOUT THE SECURITY GUARDS ON NAURU

Unfortunately we only know what we are allowed to know but from just the little bit of information we have, and information about security firms engaged by our Government, we are consigning decent human beings who have fled persecution to an indefinite term of punishment. A time of extreme fear and privation which will affect them for the rest of their lives.

LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN REGARD TO ANYTHING TO DO WITH OFFSHORE PROCESSING AND RESETTLEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Refugees and those seeking asylum are not front page news. The treatment of refugees and those seeking asylum doesn't really affect the way people are going to vote. Many Australians feel "uncomfortable" about the way they are treated but they have many other pressing day-to-day issues to deal with. While offshore processing and resettlement are off the front pages not many are asking the questions that need to be asked.

Why is Australia spending millions of extra dollars of tax payer money on offshore processing and resettlement?

How can we be sure that the money paid to The Republic of Nauru and to Papua New Guinea goes to support those seeking asylum?

How can we be sure that the money being paid to security and procurement organisations is all accounted for?

Why is the length of time those seeking asylum have to spend in detention so much longer than in other countries? (an economic issue and a human rights issue).

Australia needs to end offshore processing now.

Yours sincerely



Elizabeth Mead
Convenor Rural Australians for Refugees Griffith on behalf of our 60 members