

Senate Inquiry on Offshore Processing

Submission from Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group

Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group is a large voluntary community organisation founded 25 years ago with around 200 members and 800 recipients of our monthly newsletter and 5000 FB followers.

We understand that the inquiry's primary focus is on contracts, payments and integrity since 2022, but we know that the inclusion of "any other related matters" creates scope for the inclusion of matters in relation to Offshore Processing that occurred prior to that date and would be vital to understanding the systemic problems that plague this cruel, costly and ineffective regime.

There has been significant reporting in the media in recent months about corruption, governance failures, poor financial oversight and lack of transparency and accountability. These issues raised are by no means new and have been systemic since this policy was implemented more than two decades ago. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that the evidence stemming from implementation of the Offshore Processing policies of successive Governments be investigated by this inquiry.

If this inquiry is to be of value in exploring the matters raised in the Terms of Reference, it is critical that testimony from those refugees who have been subjected to Offshore Processing as well as from those who worked for the private contractors running the detention centres on Nauru and Manus participate in the inquiry, so that real understanding and insight is gained into the cruel reality and abuses of the system.

BMMSG has worked with refugees for over two decades, a majority of whom have suffered greatly from Australia's inhumane refugee policies. We hope that this inquiry will expose the reality that Australia's offshore processing has not worked, and that it does not align with our United Nations Human Rights obligations that people intercepted offshore should be brought to mainland Australia for humane asylum processing.

We also call for:

1. immediate transparency and access to our detention regime onshore and offshore,
2. people abandoned on PNG to be resettled in Australia and
3. a Royal Commission into offshore detention to be established.

Kathie Herbert

Vice Chair BMMSG

10/2/2026