



30 July 2017

Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of Australian Quakers I write to express deep concern at the way in which the Government is approaching the traumatic situation of those asylum seekers being detained on Nauru and Manus Island.

We endorse the statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, on 24 July, that "Australia's policy of offshore processing in Papua New Guinea and Nauru, which denies access to asylum in Australia for refugees arriving by sea without a valid visa, has caused extensive, avoidable suffering for far too long".

We believe the UNHCR acted in good faith to try and help resolve this humanitarian crisis by assisting with the agreement to relocate refugees to the USA, on the clear understanding that those with close family ties with Australia would be allowed to settle here. We agree with Mr Grandi that the Government's decision to deny all these people access to Australia "is contrary to the fundamental principles of family unity and refugee protection, and to common decency". It is also, in our view, an extreme example of pushing a 'stop the boats' policy on the pretext of 'deterrence' to boat arrivals.

We regard Australia's reputation as already tarnished by the harsh refugee policies adopted in recent years.

We join with many other Australians in urging a more just response to people whose detention has been traumatic in every way. We are distressed that the actions of the

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Government have been so lacking in compassion that UNHCR has felt it necessary to make public its anger.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.R. Jordan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jo Jordan
Presiding Clerk
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia