



PRESS RELEASE

The Refugee Protection Bill 2018 is a constructive and humane circuit breaker to the current stand-off between the major parties relating to onshore and offshore detention. The present situation on Manus and Nauru where 12 asylum seekers have died to date must be resolved and this Bill moved by Andrew Wilke the Independent member for Denison and supported by Cathie McGowan the Independent member for Indi provides an opportunity for all parties to agree on a solution.

This enabling legislation supports the principle of family unity, family reunification and the rights of children. By providing for Asia Pacific Asylum Seeker Centres in source countries it provides asylum seekers with a safe alternative to using people smugglers.

The Bill recognises that detention can only be resorted to when it is determined to be necessary reasonable and in all circumstances proportionate. If an applicant is to be detained then they must be informed of the reasons for the detention and their rights in a language which they understand.

RAR urges all members of parliament to consider this Bill carefully and think how they would feel if a member of their family was dying of lung cancer without appropriate palliative care as is the situation on Nauru. We are a privileged nation and the leadership shown by this Bill is inspirational.

Asylum seekers suffer huge trauma, first in their country of origin where they may face war, religious or political persecution, genocide, plus hazardous journeys to anticipated safety only to end up in hopeless situations in detention centres many of them with no alternatives for a positive future.

This Refugee Protection Bill will give asylum seekers hope.

Marie Sellstrom

President Rural Australians for Refugees.

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