

MEDIA ADVISORY for: **October 16, 2018**

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TUESDAY 12:00pm: Rural Australians for Refugees, Ngunnawal people, school children, students, mayor, grandparents, faith leaders, doctors, paediatricians and Canberra cyclists show Canberra at a major rally at Parliament House that country communities want #KidsOffNauru

Rural Australians for Refugees from more than 20 RAR branches from Queensland to Victoria will meet near Old Parliament House in Federation Mall and walk up the Mall towards Parliament House for the rally at 12:30pm

CANBERRA — RURAL Australians and country community leaders will on Tuesday stage a major rally to appeal to federal parliamentarians and government to staunch the deep human costs of maintaining Australia’s current regional offshore processing policy.

The action in the nation’s capital is being co-ordinated by Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) in the week of Parliament’s return – and ahead of the Wentworth by-election on Saturday.

RAR’s goal is to bring federal Parliament’s attention to **the plight of asylum seekers and refugees who remain in Nauru and Manus Island**. It is concerned specifically with Australia’s obligation to meet a basic human need – to provide **safe homes in Australia or another country that would welcome them for children and families who have sought our compassion and help**.

The rally will gather on the lawns between Old Parliament House and Parliament House before walking to Parliament House (in which both MPs and Senators are sitting) at 12:30pm. The rally’s message is that **‘Australians say ‘No’ to kids in detention’** – with an approach to Parliament to **expedite the safe resettlement of asylum seekers and refugees from Nauru and Manus Island**.

When: Tuesday, October 16 (2018) at 12:00pm (AEDT)

Where: Federation Mall lawns (near Queen Victoria Terrace, behind Old Parliament House)

Speakers: Ngunnawal elder Aunty Violet Sheridan, RAR national president Marie Sellstrom, Anglican Archdeacon of the Hume Peter MacLeod Miller, paediatrician Dr Paul Bauert, child trauma specialist Dr Sue Packer, human rights and refugee advocate John Falzon, Leeton mayor Paul Maytom, Biloela refugee advocate Angela Fredericks. Musicians Shortis and Simpson.

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Context: The government is in an exposed position with significant crossbench MPs, the community and credible media urging vital change to Australia's regional offshore processing policy. The intervention of Australian Medical Association president Tony Bartone, with his recent open letter to the Prime Minister in which he asked the government to respond rapidly and compassionately to the humanitarian emergency faced by asylum seekers and refugees on Nauru, has given significant impetus to the national discussion.

RAR believes the parliamentary sitting week (October 15-18) ahead of the Wentworth by-election (Oct 20) presents a distinctive opportunity for concerned Australians to build voice on this issue.

For more information or for an interview with RAR national president Marie Sellstrom and rally speakers, please contact:

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[Rural Australians for Refugees](#) is a grassroots movement seeking compassionate treatment of those seeking asylum.