

MEDIA ADVISORY for: **October 26, 2018**

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FRIDAY 11:30am: North East Victoria's faith representatives and Rural Australians for Refugees join #refugebell campaign to bring #KidsOffNauru

Faith communities across the country to sound #refugebell every Friday at noon until Universal Children's Day on November 20

BEECHWORTH — The Anglican parish of Christ Church is leading Victoria's North East and Border faith communities to encourage federal Parliamentarians to bring #KidsOffNauru by November 20.

Parish priest Thomas Leslie has put out a call to communities in the Anglican diocese of Wangaratta – which ranges from Marysville to Albury and Nathalia to Corryong – to follow St Eanswythe's Anglican Church in Melbourne's Altona-Laverton parish and ring bells for the safety and well-being of asylum seeker children.

Every **Friday, from October 26, these churches will simultaneously ring bells at 12:00pm for the children remaining on Nauru.** The #refugebell will sound until **Universal Children's Day**, when the **#KidsOffNauru** national campaign — supported by 300 organisations across the country — is working to project the image **#KidsOffNauru** and the faces of asylum seeker children on the sails of the Sydney Opera House.

Media opportunity

When: Friday, October 26 (2018) at 11:30am (AEDT)

Where: Christ Church, 27 Ford Street, Beechworth VIC 3747

Who: Beechworth Anglican parish priest Father Thomas Leslie, Rural Australians for Refugees Beechworth and Border co-convenor Jamie Kronborg, and Indigo mayor Jenny O'Connor* (Indigo Shire is a Refugee Welcome Zone).

Background

St Eanswythe's five weeks ago began tolling a bell every Friday for each of the asylum seeker children effectively detained on Nauru because of the Australian government's offshore regional processing policy. At the first vigil the bell tolled 95 times. St Mark's Balnarring and St Faith's Glen Iris followed St Eanswythe's lead.

Beechworth's Anglican Christ Church and most of the Anglican communities in the diocese of Wangaratta have now joined the **#refugebell** campaign, including the cathedral church of Holy Trinity (in Wangaratta).

Since St Eanswythe's first sounded its **#refugebell** the number of asylum seeker children effectively detained on Nauru has fallen to 52 (at October 23) as a result of medical emergency evacuations to Australia. Another three children are detained in the Immigration Department's Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation (MITA).

Rural Australians for Refugees is supporting **#refugebell**, encouraging all faith communities in Australia to join the campaign.

The action follows a major rally in Canberra on October 16 co-ordinated by RAR ahead of the Wentworth by-election on October 20.

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.**

To **arrange interviews** please contact:

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(* *subject to council commitments*)

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