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Issue for March 2024

Nauru

Available to download at –

- <https://aran.net.au/resources/letter-writing/>
- <https://ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org.au/write-a-letter>



Included in this kit is the information you need to create your own letters or use the proformas

- Guide and Background notes prepared by ARAN’s Letter Writing Network.
- Postal Addresses for MPs and Senators
- Email addresses for MPs and Senators
- A proforma letter that you can copy (and personalise) to send by post or email.

Personalised letters are best –

- You might like to use the **AIDA** principle
 - **A - Attention** - grab the recipient's attention. Say something positive about the reader that is directed towards the focus of your letter. Stimulate the recipient's curiosity
 - **I - Interest & Information**- encourage the recipient to read on.
 - **D - Desire** - Getting the reader to want to do what you are seeking - in their interest to do so.
 - **A - Action**- inform the reader of the action you want them to take.

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Regards,  
The ARAN Letter Writing Network  
[austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com](mailto:austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com)

# Nauru

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO WRITE NOW

Both the recently published Richardson Review and the latest maritime arrivals on the Western Australia shore are topics in Australia's mainstream news right now. Of the former, little has been said, at least by the Opposition.

Of the latter, there is the usual hysteria and overblown rhetoric with the Opposition politicising the news to cast doubt on Labor's ability to protect Australia's borders.

Neither major political party has said a word about the human rights, refugee policies or the humanity of those seeking help, against all odds, from a known hostile State. Neither party has said anything about the conditions driving people to take these desperate measures.

Australia's recent history of offshore detention and processing is harsh and cruel and has drawn endless censure.

It has also been corrupt and hugely expensive - both in terms of dollars and lives.

And yet - here we go again. Except now it is Labor in Government, and instead of calling for transparency, the Labor Government is emulating the secretive policies of their predecessors.

Given what we now know about 10 years of corruption, lack of transparency and human misery - WE NEED A ROYAL COMMISSION INTO OFFSHORE DETENTION. All the independent members of the House of Representatives jointly issued a call for a Royal Commission on Tuesday 1 August 2023.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### History

- Refugees and asylum seekers (including women and children) suffered devastating harm in Nauru (documented in the Nauru Files 2016). These files contain evidence of assaults, self harm, abuse, sexual assaults and suicide.
- Dozens of countries, UN, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch – all have documented and condemned illegal offshore processing and detention. Paradoxical as Australia is also a signatory to the Refugee Convention which obliges member countries to protect those fleeing persecution
- In June 24 2023, the last refugee on Nauru was flown into Brisbane. However, the Albanese Government did not close the Nauru Processing Centre, claiming 'it remains committed to offshore detention processing as a policy' and the centre remained open at an annual cost of \$250 million.
- 11 people were transferred to Nauru in September 2023 – less than 3 months after it was emptied. This was the first Australian transfer to Nauru in 9 years. Another 12 were transferred to Nauru in November 2023
- On 18 February 2024, 39 men were flown from Western Australia to Nauru. The figures vary depending on what source one accesses.

### Transparency

- When in opposition, the Labor Government repeatedly called for greater transparency. But now they're in power - it's business as usual. Offshore detention achieves its aim of shifting asylum seekers out of sight and out of mind, as the Richardson review is clearly demonstrating, 'Whatever happens in PNG or Nauru is fine, so long as they continue to keep our secrets, so long as they agree to keep storing our refugees.'
- The Government uses the term, 'on-water enhanced screening assessment'. This raises questions too. Who conducts this screening? What is the methodology? How thorough is it?
- The Department refuses to give any information about the cohort of people - 'unauthorized maritime arrivals' - who have 'voluntarily' returned home
- 8 of the 11 people (including one child and a woman) who arrived in September have been returned to their country of origin. This in itself raises questions. What is their country of origin? How were they returned? Was it forced or voluntary? Was any processing attempted prior?

## Corruption

- The Richardson Report disclosed a gross lack of due diligence in awarding lucrative contracts to Canstruct and MTC to operate Nauru Detention Centre. In neither case was there a tendering process.
- *Canstruct* has been linked with bribery and corruption.
- In the case of Management and Training Corporation (MTC) there was a lack of evidence of security or criminal checks prior to the Albanese Government signing the contract. The parent company in the US has a history of negligence, settling for multiple cases where it has been accused of deaths, and allegedly allowing a detainee to be gang-raped. They are currently facing fraud charges in Texas, USA, and have been accused of money laundering.
- The cost of offshore detention has been huge and varied. MTC now receives \$350 million/year to operate Nauru Detention Centre. The Richardson Report cites the cost to host countries in terms of corruption and these countries are reported to be less democratic than before. The Refugee Council of Australia details the financial cost to taxpayers.

## Sources:

### Richardson Review

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/feb/12/australia-paid-companies-linked-to-suspected-drug-and-weapons-smuggling-to-run-offshore-detention-review-finds>
2. <https://asrc.org.au/2024/02/13/richardson-report-gives-further-evidence-to-end-offshore-corruption/>
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/feb/17/barnaby-joyce-footpath-video-incident-comment>
4. <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Refugee-Council-2024-25-Pre-Budget-Submission.pdf>
5. <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/operation-sovereign-borders-offshore-detention-statistics/2/>

### Corruption

6. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/jan/31/millions-allegedly-misspent-or-wasted-in-australias-offshore-detention-system-senior-home-affairs-official-tells-tribunal>
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/jul/31/labor-nauru-contracts-inquiry-clare-o-neil>
8. <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/comment/editorial/2024/02/10/detention-disgrace>

### Recent Boat Arrivals in WA

9. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/feb/18/second-group-of-asylum-seekers-found-at-indigenous-campsite-in-remote-northern-wa>
10. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/feb/16/more-than-20-people-arrive-by-boat-in-remote-part-of-western-australia>

### Deportation

11. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/jan/22/australia-asylum-seekers-nauru-returned-home-country>

### Nauru

12. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/aug/10/the-nauru-files-are-raw-evidence-of-torture-can-we-look-away>
13. <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/nauru-report/>
14. <https://action.asrc.org.au/end-secrecy-on-nauru>

### Call for a Royal Commission

15. <https://justiceandpeace.org.au/immigration-detention-royal-commission-push-gathers-momentum/>

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## Who to write to:

*We suggest you write to*

- Minister for Home Affairs, **Clare O’Neil**
- Minister for Immigration, **Andrew Giles**

Plus your local member if Labor/Greens/Progressive Independent – if Coalition – then Labor Senators in your state)

## Addresses for your letters:

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### Canberra Postal Address for all **SENATORS**

PO Box 6100  
Senate,  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

### Canberra Postal Address for all **MPs**

PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

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Find **electorate** postal and email addresses for your local Labor MP here:  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/senators\\_and\\_members/members](https://www.aph.gov.au/senators_and_members/members)

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### EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR ALL SENATORS - UPDATED JUNE 2023

NB - For your convenience - **LABOR PARTY SENATORS ARE LISTED IN RED**

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Email addresses for all **ACT** senators - ready to copy and paste into "TO" section of your email:

[senator.katy.gallagher@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.katy.gallagher@aph.gov.au); [Senator.David.Pocock@aph.gov.au](mailto:Senator.David.Pocock@aph.gov.au)

Email addresses for all **NSW** senators - ready to copy and paste into "TO" section of your email:

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[senator.davey@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.davey@aph.gov.au); [senator.faruqi@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.faruqi@aph.gov.au); [senator.hughes@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.hughes@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.kovacic@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.kovacic@aph.gov.au); [senator.mcallister@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.mcallister@aph.gov.au); [senator.oneill@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.oneill@aph.gov.au);  
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[senator.mcgrath@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.mcgrath@aph.gov.au); [senator.rennick@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.rennick@aph.gov.au); [senator.roberts@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.roberts@aph.gov.au);  
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[senator.fawcett@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.fawcett@aph.gov.au); [senator.grogan@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.grogan@aph.gov.au); [senator.hanson-young@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.hanson-young@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.liddle@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.liddle@aph.gov.au); [senator.mclachlan@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.mclachlan@aph.gov.au); [senator.pocock@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.pocock@aph.gov.au);  
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[senator.chandler@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.chandler@aph.gov.au); [senator.colbeck@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.colbeck@aph.gov.au); [senator.duniam@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.duniam@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.lambie@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.lambie@aph.gov.au); [senator.mckim@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.mckim@aph.gov.au); [senator.polley@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.polley@aph.gov.au);  
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[senator.hume@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.hume@aph.gov.au); [senator.mckenzie@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.mckenzie@aph.gov.au); [senator.paterson@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.paterson@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.rice@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.rice@aph.gov.au); [senator.stewart@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.stewart@aph.gov.au); [senator.thorpe@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.thorpe@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.van@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.van@aph.gov.au); [senator.walsh@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.walsh@aph.gov.au); [senator.white@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.white@aph.gov.au)

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[senator.dodson@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.dodson@aph.gov.au); [senator.lines@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.lines@aph.gov.au); [senator.matt.o'sullivan@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.matt.o'sullivan@aph.gov.au);  
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NOTE: If you are sending an email be sure to **include** your **NAME** and **ADDRESS**

The Subject line could be - **CALL TO ACTION - Nauru**

**LETTER - example only - please write in your own words.**

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Dear Minister

Labor came to power promising greater transparency and accountability. But when it comes to the treatment of people seeking asylum who arrive by boat, the Labor government has continued the Coalition's stance of secrecy. It is difficult to get any information about the latest arrivals to the Nauru Regional Processing Centre.

Under the Coalition's Operation Sovereign Borders, Australia gained an international reputation for ruthlessness and deliberate cruelty in its dealings with refugees which is paradoxical because it is also a long-standing signatory to the Refugee Convention. Australia remains the only country in the world to use offshore detention, hand in hand with a promise that NO individuals who arrive by boat will ever settle in Australia.

The worst effect of offshore detention has been the human suffering inflicted on vulnerable men, women and children seeking safety and sanctuary by sea. Their numbers are but a trickle compared to asylum seekers arriving by air, yet they are the only ones subjected to incarceration offshore. Perusing Guardian Australia's *Nauru Files* is a shocking experience - children as young as 7 attempting suicide, starving themselves, subject to psychological damage that will never leave them.

The Department of Home Affairs' Richardson Review<sup>1</sup> has documented the failures of the Departments of Immigration and Home Affairs in managing the administration of offshore detention. Detaining asylum seekers in developing nations and offering lucrative contracts to private companies without due diligence has resulted in a corrupt system damaging the integrity of nascent democracies and wasting billions of dollars of the Australian taxpayer's money. Almost \$13 billion has been spent on offshore detention since 2012. *Canstruct*, which operated for almost 10 years, and MTC, managing Nauru now, are equally questionable choices.

Having been emptied in June 2023, with recent boat arrivals it would appear that there are now about 54-62 detainees being held in immigration detention on Nauru, with a further 8 (or possibly more) having been returned to their country of origin. The Government is refusing to provide any information about the welfare of the people seeking asylum who were sent to Nauru. Questions abound: Were recent asylum seekers processed before refoulement? Was removal/deportation forced or voluntary? Where were they returned to? How long does the Government intend to keep detainees on Nauru? What oversight will be provided to ensure detainees' rights and needs are respected? What plans for resettlement exist for refugees?

There is an immediate need for transparency in the dealings on Nauru - knowing that every day in detention causes immense harm and breeds corruption and abuse. The ASRC and other organisations are calling for the Government to lift the shroud of secrecy on Nauru. There is a call for an end to offshore detention and for a much-needed Royal Commission into Immigration Detention. I beg you to support this initiative and end a heinous period in Australia's history.

Yours sincerely

Your Name and Address

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<sup>1</sup> Dennis Richardson. Review of Integrity Concerns and Governance Arrangements for the Management of Regional Processing Administration by the Department of Home Affairs <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/files/richardson-review/richardson-review-report.pdf>