

## **SUBMISSION: Migration Amendment (Evacuation to Safety) Bill 2023.**

Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group Inc. is making this submission in support of the Migration Amendment (Evacuation to Safety) Bill 2023 and we give our consent for our submission to be made public.

We have witnessed over the past 10 years, successive Australian Governments deny refugees their human rights, the right to seek asylum and with that the opportunity to rebuild their lives in safety, after fleeing trauma and violence in their home countries.

Although many of those refugees held offshore have been resettled in a third country or evacuated through the Kids off Nauru and Medevac Campaigns, a decade later around 150 remain, against their will. After a decade, every person held offshore needs urgent mental and physical medical care.

Our members are all volunteers and we have been supporting and advocating for refugees for over 20 years now and many of us have close relationships with refugees through our Community and Villawood Visitor Programs, many of whom are evacuees from offshore detention. We see first hand the terrible damage this has done to their mental and physical health.

We would like to share some stories of these refugees.

D...was detained for 6 years on Nauru and now has been in Community Detention for nearly 4 years, she has a small child, no work rights and no hope of settling here. Her health is poor, she has trouble with her mobility, unable to walk long distances and the condition of her skin is very poor and we have been able to help her pay for a specialist for this condition , she is depressed , bored and anxious and even after all this time her English is very poor because she has been denied access to tuition

A....whose medical evacuation was delayed, has permanent damage to his eyes, from a condition that could have been cured if it had had attention

earlier and he has ongoing kidney problems because of inadequate treatment offshore and mentally he is depressed and anxious.

M...has ongoing stomach problems due to delayed treatment and after 10 years of detention he too is understandably depressed and riddled with anxiety.

All of these refugees would find it very difficult to work full-time because of the poor state of their health directly attributed to their decade of being subjected to harm and cruelty at the hands of the Australian Government.

This Bill will see the transfer of all persons subjected to offshore processing transferred to Australia within in one month of it's commencement; appropriate and adequate medical assessments and treatment will be given to all evacuees and they will automatically be placed into community detention.

It is the responsibility of the Australian Government to provide urgent medical care and uphold the rights of people seeking asylum and I am sure you will agree that is the least we can do after detaining these innocent people for 10 years and subjecting them to such cruelty which has caused them so much harm.

We urge you to support this Bill and see it pass through parliament and release these refugees from their torment.

Yours Sincerely,



Kathie Herbert, Chairperson BMRSG

22/02/2023

