

12 December 2017

The Hon Peter Dutton MP
Minister for Immigration and Border Protection
Suite MG-46
Ministerial Wing, Ground Floor
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email to: minister@border.gov.au

Dear Minister Dutton

We write as Presidents of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists to express our concern about the physical and mental health of the men transferred to Papua New Guinea after seeking asylum in Australia. While some of us have written to you individually, we write now to express our collective concerns.

Our concerns involve their immediate health care access and living conditions; their on-going health and wellbeing; and the impacts on Lorengau General Hospital and the Manusian community.

We acknowledge that the situation regarding these issues on Manus Island is evolving and that some steps are being taken by authorities to improve the facilities after the closure of the regional processing centre on 31 October 2017. However, we call for:

- Improved transparency of information on the living conditions and access to healthcare services.
- Expedited action to ensure suitable and secure living conditions with adequate water, power and sanitation.
- Urgent action to ensure Lorengau General Hospital is sufficiently resourced to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers for emergency and specialised health care.
- Appropriate, rapid transfer processes for refugees and asylum seekers who are too ill to be managed on Manus Island.
- Assurance that refugees and asylum seekers will continue to be provided with their medications as needed.
- Urgent establishment of a fully staffed mental health service with enhanced primary care, psychological treatment, torture and trauma counselling, out-reach and emergency service first responder support capabilities.
- Regular independent assessment of the physical and mental health of refugees and asylum seekers in Papua New Guinea by suitably qualified personnel.
- The establishment of a trusted intermediary to facilitate engagement between asylum seekers with the host community and relevant authorities.

These initiatives must be underpinned by urgent implementation of viable resettlement options for all refugees and asylum seekers transferred to Papua New Guinea by Australia.

We call upon the Australian Government to address these issues urgently in conjunction with the Papua New Guinea Government. We are also forwarding this letter to your colleagues Ministers Greg Hunt, David Gillespie and Ken Wyatt given the health focus of this correspondence.

We are willing to provide expert input and support as called upon.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this letter further, please contact Tara Bates, RANZCP External Relations Manager via tara.bates@ranzcp.org or by phone on (03) 9601 4959.

Yours sincerely



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