

# Manus Lives Matter

## We Can't Go On

Newsletter

Issue July 2019

### How Did Our Treatment of Refugees Come to This?

Asks Jane McAdam and Fiona Chong of the Kaldor Centre

Imagine losing an eye in an assault and going slowly blind in the other, but having no medical treatment available. Or having your kneecap torn loose, causing intense pain and swelling but being given nothing but paracetamol and a bandage. Or having a stroke, and needing to see a neurologist, psychiatrist and a cardiologist, but being offered aspirin. These things have happened to refugees held offshore, on Australia's watch. How did it come to this?....

Currently more than 800 people remain on Nauru and Manus Island, living in idle despair. Many have been there for six years, with no clear end in sight, even though most have been found to be refugees. More than 80% suffer from depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder. Since the federal election in May there have been nearly 100 suicide attempts and acts of self harm on Manus Island alone. In refugee Rights and Policy Wrongs, we argue that a radically different approach is possible- one that is evidence based and consistent with international refugee and human rights law, one that addresses the conditions that lead refugees to take boat journeys in the first place, and provides Australia with the opportunity to take leadership on one of the most pressing global issues of our time.....

Providing a welcoming, secure and respectful environment for refugees results in greater social and economic benefits for everyone and a stronger, more cohesive Australia.

We have done it before. We can do it again.

**Fr Giorgio Licini leads Catholic church leaders in PNG** who have visited Manus and those in Moresby hospital and are appalled at what they see.

His latest messages on facebook:

Be Aware that those in need of Medivac in Manus and Nauru arrived there healthy in 2013. They were made sick by Australia.

**People of Australia move fast and united  
Or the unfolding tragedy will leave a stain  
on all of you  
for generations to come.**



A suicidal refugee is taken to hospital from one of the detention centres on Manus Island. Photo: Facebook / Giorgio Licini



In their trauma and despair the men do not want to die, they just do not want to go on living like this. One man set fire to himself and others had to break down the door to save him. Hanging, to the point of unconsciousness, cutting, swallowing pins, razors and nail cutters, overdosing, happen many times a day. They are all on suicide watch.

## **MEDIVAC is working**

Under the leadership of Kerryn Phelps a bill was passed last year to allow the very ill who are not getting the medical care they need on Manus and Nauru to come for medical help in Australia. The government fought it and lost and continues to scaremonger and lie about it.

Dutton's push to repeal it has been stymied for now by a decision to send it to a legal and constitutional senate committee for review. Doctors and others can now make submissions and present evidence to this review. The repeal cannot be debated until November.

How it works:

1. Men with the help of supporters apply for medivac. They have to get access to and provide medical records- a difficult task for traumatised men.
2. A volunteer team led by the Refugee Council of Australia and other refugee legal, medical and support volunteers called MERG accept applications, divide them into categories and allocate each to a different doctor.
3. Doctors study the evidence and often phone and talk to the applicant. Lawyers might check on legal points and help prepare the case.
4. Two different reports are prepared to meet requirements of the Bill.
5. Applications are put to the Minister signed off by two doctors. Dutton can reject them on many grounds. Any he rejects go to a panel of about 9 doctors appointed by Dutton.
6. The panel can overturn Dutton's decision on medical grounds.

**TO DATE 84% of applicants  
have been approved by the Minister or Panel**

**As of 4 July 2019 at 4pm:**

**Approved by the Minister or panel:**

**51 people under the Medivac  
(from both Nauru and Manus)**

**26 already transferred to Australia by 4 July**

**16 more were to arrive Friday 5 July**

**32 more applications from Manus are before the  
Minister**

**Nauru applications** are more problematic. It seems there is an unknown committee on Manus refusing to let some seriously ill men come. The Federal Court this week gave Minister Dutton 5 days to reveal the names of those holding up transfer and do something about it.

## **Let's Battle for Australia's Soul**

At RAC Public Meeting on 2 July Professor 'Emeritus **John Warhurst**' said ...

" We need champions right across the community, champions in the media and champions in the parliament in order to advance the cause of those whose voices who are silenced by bluster by lies and by fear mongering.'

**Dr Kerryn Phelps** called her talk 'Medevac: The Battle for Australia's Soul' and said 'Our sense of ourselves and each other is under threat too and it is because of the way we are treating people who are in indefinite detention. That is marring our sense of ourselves as good people as well-intentioned people.' 'This is about human beings and we have to think and we have to bear in mind that this is not about a political contest between sides or about somebody's idea about how the world should run this is about real people desperately needing hope of freedom and safety and that is why we have to defend Medevac.'

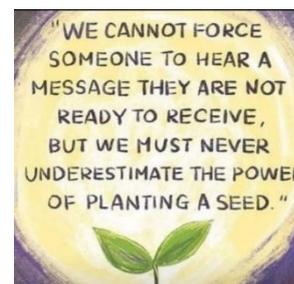


TALK to your friends, family and colleagues to dispel the lies and scaremongering.

Talk to your church leaders who should be out there in the forefront leading in calling the government to account.

Dutton retains full power to stop anyone coming he doesn't approve except if a panel of 9 doctors he has appointed tell him he is wrong on medical grounds.

**CHALLENGE EVERY LIE**



## BE EMPOWERED IDEAS FOR ACTION

### Rally with all Canberra Refugee Supporters

**Saturday 20 July 1pm**

**Cnr London Circuit & Northbourne**

Google for other cities, towns and venues.

To rally on the anniversary of the declaration of indefinite offshore detention.

Six years on Manus and Nauru, Six Years too Long.

Enough is Enough

**Write letters to newspapers.** Email Eileen in Canberra to get onto the RAC letter Writing email list for ideas and updates

**Eileen O'Brien** <eileensus@gmail.com>

### Visit or phone your local members Rally with all Canberra Refugee Supporters

Snail mail, email, phone calls. Respectful and a few points clearly stated

### DONATE via Manus Lives Matter

#### Every day we get new requests- from depressed guys

Saying YES is more than giving the material things they need.

It is saying we care and have not given up on them.

#### Needed:

##### Medical supplies

Money to get their medical files released- up to \$160

**Food** to supplement rationed unhygienic food

**Outings** Money to go out for a day after 2 years in one motel room waiting for medical help and nothing except food given to them or a day's trip on Manus.

Clothes & personal items -some get no money at all.

**Phone Credit:** MLM donors already give \$35 credit to 50 each month. We need a few more regular donors who will give \$35 per month or small amounts to supplement those who do not get enough.

#### New phones

After 6 years many have worn out and not having a phone is extremely difficult and stressful for the men. Some are stolen. One young man had his stolen as he held it in his hands talking to his mother overseas.

**DONATE:** Account St George: Name: Brigidine Sisters BSB 112879 Account: 010449549 Reference: Your name.

Email Jane for information, thanks and updates:

[janeikeogh@gmail.com](mailto:janeikeogh@gmail.com)

### A Big Thanks to those who have donated generously for a long time now or recently.

If I haven't thanked you it may be because I cannot find your contact.

Someone using Bendigo Bank donates but I have no idea who it is. Someone unnamed gave \$400 for SisterKeogh. Others with the following initials are also not known and I would like to thank you:

Ann Z, Lisa H, Marlene P, Camilla W. **If you received no update please make contact so I can thank you and tell you what your money went to.**

## THE US Deal

Over 600 have gone to the US from Manus and Nauru including 40 who left from Manus this past month. 265 refugees were rejected by the US with no reason given except "discretion".

50 guys are still waiting some over a year for an answer about their applications

I estimate about 30 have not even had an interview and no one can tell them why or if they ever will.

Some very sick guys have gone and it is worrying how they will survive with long term damage after 6 years of trauma with little US medical support. Wages are low. On arrival they get medical and a little other support for about three months then they are on their own.

Those who have joined with relatives or friends from Manus seems to be doing better.

All refugees have to repay the US for the flights so they start with a huge debt.

Dutton is claiming many have refused the US deal.

What he fails to mention is that many of these have family already in Australia and do not want to split their families and go to where there is no support.



### Canada Sponsorship

Laurie Cooper of Caring Canada has initiated a project to offer all who were rejected by the US with no other option to apply to Canada under the Canadian Sponsorship Program.

The cost of sponsorship is \$18,000 per person, a guarantee to show the refugee can support himself the first year if necessary. Support groups have to be found in Canada to offer settlement support.

Jane and a few MLM colleagues and the Refugee Council of Australia are supporting this initiative.

An international fundraising effort will commence soon. Already a small number of Manus men have applied for sponsorship.

While this offers hope in the long term the process can take up to two years so is little practical o help right now.

## Corruption re Contracts to companies paid millions to service Manus ?

The money being spent to keep Manus and Nauru operational equates to **\$573,000 per refugee per year** with the Sentates Estimates revealing the true cost is only 10% of that.

It is reported that **NKW Holdings** paid to feed and house 209 asylum seekers are suspected of inflating invoices while making millions in profit by charging \$1400 per person per day at WestHaus and Hillside.

**JDA Wokman** workers make claims about falsifying documentation to amek it look like they were meeting government requirements.

**PIH hospital** was given a \$32m without a contract for over 10 months to provide health care despite accusations of inadequate care and concern over expertise and treatment standards and links to a former PNG PM. are accused o falsifying documentation to make it look like they are meeting government requirments.

### MANUS CONTRACTS

#### Pacific International Hospital

Contract Period:

1-May-2018 to 30-Jun-2019

Contract Value (AUD):

\$31,915,538.73

Original: \$4,838,437.48

#### NKW Holdings

Contract Period:

21-Sep-2018 to 30-Jun-2019

Contract Value (AUD):

\$82,032,334.37

Original: \$21,873,202.18

#### Paladin Solutions

Contract Period:

28-Feb-2018 to 30-Jun 2019

\$333,546,146.40

Original: \$176,876,834.40

#### JDA Wokman

Contract Period:

4-Dec-2017 to 30-Jun-2019

Contract Value (AUD):

\$44,319,907.38

Original: \$8,123,458.02

**LATE FINAL EXIRA:** The Senate- Labor, Greens and enough of the crossbench- have just agreed to a motion from Kristina Keneally for the next day of sitting. A long specified list of correspondence, emails and notes of discussion relating to these companies and dealings with Home Affairs including briefings and talking points of Home Affairs on these issues must be presented to parliament. BY 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019.

Now, in spite of our anguish, is the time for HOPE. And determination.

The following words of Dan Rather, an American journalist can be applied just as much to the Australian situation.

I will not shield my eyes or my heart from the realities that we face. But I will also not give up on our ability to fix our problems. To give up, to give in to cynicism, is to admit defeat. I firmly believe that the majority of Americans do not believe this should be our destiny, and while I do not minimize the political, structural or legal headwinds that hinder the path to justice, I will not give up on the decency and energy of millions of my fellow Americans to right our wrongs.

I will not let the forces of cruelty and division who say, "this is who we are" have the last word.



### NEW ZEALAND OFFER

This is still on the table but the LNP would rather have the men die and suffer permanent damage than allow anyone to go there.

We need to apply pressure that once the US deal is finalised later this year we need to get the first 150 to NZ.

There is a lot of pressure on the PNG government to get the men off Manus so it may be timely to get the government here to allow this to happen.

This could be a good topic for discussion with politicians meantime.