



# Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

## Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office



**18 August 2016**

**Media Statement from Fr Maurizio Pettena CS,  
Director, Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office**

“The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office welcomes the decision of the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Mr Peter O’Neill, and Australian Minister of Immigration, Mr Peter Dutton, to close the Manus Island Detention centre.”

“Minister Dutton has said that there is no rush to close the centre, but we urge that a solution to the situation of the men in the detention centre ought to be decided quickly. Many of these men have already been in detention for more than three years.”

“There are many Catholic religious and community groups in Australia who have offered their assistance to those who are found to be genuine refugees.”

“We urge the Minister to do everything possible to quickly find a safe country of settlement for these men, in order to not protract their situation any longer.”

“We are concerned that refugees who have been determined as genuine refugees will not be found a safe country of settlement.”

“This is a complex issue that can be dealt with and resolved with a more humane solution.”

“We again affirm that the Catholic Church opposes mandatory indefinite detention and offshore detention because these policy responses do not respect the dignity of people seeking our help. This is also not consistent with Australia’s obligations under the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention.”

“It is imperative that the dignity of the human person always come first.”

“Governments have a responsibility to manage migration flows, but the Australian Government’s current approach is becoming morally abhorrent and should change.”

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