

#BackTheBill to save lives offshore

February 08, 2019

Federation is proud to join with other civil society organisations to sign the statement below. We encourage all Members of Parliament to support the forthcoming bill to ensure an adequate medical transfer process is in place for people detained in Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

For the full list of organisations supporting this statement, [click here](#). The Urgent Medical Transfer Bill will be voted in Parliament on Tuesday (12 February).

Federation urges its members to take action by calling on our Members of Parliament to back the Bill. To show your support in person, meet at 12pm this Saturday 9 February at Munro Park opposite Cronulla station. From there we'll March together to Scott Morrison's office.



#BackTheBill to save lives offshore - Joint Statement from civil society organisations

We, the undersigned organisations, are urgently calling on all Members of Parliament in the House of Representatives to support the Home Affairs Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous Measures) Bill 2018 ("The Bill") and in particular, the 'Urgent Medical Treatment' amendment moved and accepted in the Senate which pertains to the temporary transfer of offshore refugee patients requiring further medical treatment to Australia at the behest of Australian medical professionals.

We note that 12 people have died in offshore detention over the last 5 years. Many of these deaths relate to untreated illnesses, with an Australian coroner finding that at least one young refugee's death was directly related to a failure to transfer this young man to adequate tertiary medical care in Australia. The medical situation continues to be urgent for those ill men, women, and young adults who arrived in offshore detention as children more than 5 years ago.

Medical experts, including doctors who have worked on Nauru and Manus Island, have spoken repeatedly about their concerns regarding a medical transfer system that is not working, and political interference in their clinical recommendations for transfer. These doctors report widespread, significant deterioration in physical and mental health of those held offshore. A growing number of refugees have had to be transferred to Australia by order of the Australian Federal Court for treatment after doctors' recommendations for transfer went unheeded.

Qualified medical professionals, not politicians nor bureaucrats, should be responsible for determining whether their patients require treatment.

This reflects Australia's healthcare system, and how it should operate to anyone in our care, including those detained in offshore detention for more than 5 years.

The Bill institutes a clear, transparent, enforceable and timely process to provide a medical solution to a medical problem. The requirement for the process to be initiated on the recommendation of at least two

treating doctors, with the option of case review by an expert medical panel should the Minister refuse the recommendation of the treating doctors, provides for a rigorous transfer process.

The Bill represents an important compromise across the political spectrum, it does not require the permanent resettlement of any refugee in Australia, nor does it change the system of offshore detention – but it will save lives, and ensure the Australian Government does not continue withholding treatment from critically ill individuals.

We urge all Members of Parliament to support this Bill to save lives and prevent unnecessary suffering.

Reach out to your local MP and ask them, as one of their constituents, to back the bill.

For advice on how to find the details of your local MP, visit: <https://www.kidsoffnauru.com/act> For talking points while making the call or emailing visit: <https://kids-off-nauru.good.do/backthebill/backthebill/>

Promote the campaign on social media using the #BackTheBill.