



# National Council of Churches in Australia

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
19 OCTOBER 2018

## **MULTI-FAITH GROUP ENCOURAGED THAT GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION “ARE LISTENING”**

Leaders from Christian, Muslim and Jewish groups had informative meetings with the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship (Hon David Coleman MP) and the Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Control (Hon Shayne Neumann MP) at Parliament House yesterday.

After listening to the various positions on the medical and humanitarian crisis situations on Manus Island and Nauru and pursuit of safe resettlement options, the multi-faith group has offered to cooperate in whatever way we can through our faith communities in Australia and New Zealand.

“Our faiths emphasise compassion and the right of all people to live in dignity. We welcome the stranger, befriend the foreigner, and care for those most vulnerable.”

“Our shared priority must be to remove the children and their families from the harm of indefinite offshore detention and give them hope and protection through appropriate support services that are available in Australia and New Zealand. Five years is too long” said Bishop Philip Huggins, President of National Council of Churches in Australia, on behalf of the multi-faith group.

The faith leaders encouraged bi-partisan discussions urgently so as to end the harm to the detainees on Manus Island and Nauru, especially the children. “We believe that is what Australians want and definitely what our faith communities want from our elected parliamentary representatives” the group said.

“Our next step will be to engage with our faith partners in New Zealand and with them consult with the New Zealand Government. We will continue to work with all parties in Australia and New Zealand who want to end the impasse and end the current inhumane treatment of people on Manus Island and Nauru.”

Members of the delegation were:

- **Bishop Philip Huggins**, Anglican Bishop of Melbourne and President of National Council of Churches in Australia
- **Rabbi Shamir Caplan**, Beit Aharon Synagogue (Melbourne)
- **Imam Alaa Elzokm**, Elsedeaq Mosque (Melbourne)
- **Loreto Sister Libby Rogerson**, Catholic Religious Australia
- **Elizabeth Stone**, Interim General Secretary, National Council of Churches in Australia
- **Harold Zwier**

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Anglican Church

Antiochian  
Orthodox Church

Armenian  
Apostolic Church

Assyrian Church  
of the East

Chinese Methodist  
Church

Churches of Christ

Congregational  
Federation

Coptic  
Orthodox Church

Greek  
Orthodox Church

Indian  
Orthodox Church

Lutheran Church

Mar Thoma Church

Religious Society  
of Friends (Quakers)

Roman Catholic Church

Romanian  
Orthodox Church

Syrian  
Orthodox Church

The Salvation Army

Uniting Church

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