



MEDIA RELEASE

21 MAY 2019

Marking this time of new beginning, we urge the newly elected Federal Government and Prime Minister Scott Morrison to resolve the plight of the 1000+ refugees in Manus and Nauru, some of whom are now in Australia.

Let them settle here.

It is a new day in our Australian democracy; a time for new beginnings. It would be so wonderful if this painful matter from the past was concluded now.

In some of our Scriptures there is the record of a Jubilee moment when people help others make a new beginning, offering consolation to those long trapped in bleak circumstances.

The source of this kindness is the recognition that all we have comes from God as gift or Rahamim or Chesed, in our various traditions.

In the Jubilee, those who need special consideration are given the grace of a new beginning.

The start of a new Parliament is like a Jubilee moment, fresh with potential for doing good.

The facts are well known. Unless there is some initiative by the new Government, given previous policy, the refugees remaining in Manus and Nauru will face many more years stuck as they are today, drained of hope.

This is painful beyond words.

But new beginnings offer the promise that things will get better.

An ennobling act by our newly elected Prime Minister would lift people's spirits, giving hope that better days lie ahead.

Bishop Philip Huggins (President of National Council of Churches in Australia)

Elizabeth Stone (National Council of Churches in Australia)

Ahmet Keskin (Australian Intercultural Society)

Imam Dr Bekim Hasani

Rev Ian Smith (Victorian Council of Churches)

Rabbi Fred Morgan AM

Emeritus Professor Joseph A. Camilleri OAM (Pax Christi)

Sr Libby Rogerson IBVM (Loreto Sister)

Imam Alaa Elzokm

Imam Riad Galil OAM

Sheik Abu Omar

Rabbi Shamir Caplan

Rob Floyd (Chair of Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce)

Cantor Michel Laloum

Rabbi Kim Ettlinger

For media contact:

Elizabeth Stone Tel 0437 402 884

Harold Zwier Tel. 0416 236 690