

ONLINE FORUM – Tuesday 21 July 2026 7.30-8.30pm AEST

[Zoom link for online forum 21 July](#) Click here

Refugees: Out of Sight...(but not) Out of Mind

Australia's Offshore 'Processing'

Hosted by the Australian Refugee Action Network (ARAN), the forum will shine a spotlight on:

- The ongoing harm caused by Australia's offshore 'processing' regime and resistance in the face of cruelty
- Key critiques of Australia's offshore regime and 'externalisation' of our responsibilities to people seeking asylum
- Alternative approaches and discussion on effective activism and advocacy.

SPEAKERS:

Laura Johns – Associate Legal Director at the Human Rights Law Centre

Sr Jane Keogh – Manus Lives Matter

Senator David Shoebridge - Greens senator and member of Senate Committee



“Our clients were degraded, dehumanised and had their lives devalued over many years in the camps on [Nauru](#) and Manus Island. Their statements describe the horror of life in detention including physical and sexual violence, racism, discrimination and self-harm....They bear witness to the unimaginable inhumanity experienced by the women, men and children incarcerated over many years”. Maurice Blackburn principal lawyer Jennifer Kanis. (2023) . Images here: <https://www.exhibitai.com.au/home> Ben Doherty in April 2023

19 July 2026, marks 13 years since then PM, Kevin Rudd, took Australia's treatment of people seeking asylum to a new moral low, ruling that anyone arriving by boat from July 2013 would never settle in Australia. This decision entrenched Australia's use of third countries to site its offshore immigration 'processing', this policy regime dates back further to 2001 under John Howard. However, under Howard's laws, people assessed offshore and found to be refugees were still able to settle in Australia, but Rudd's ruling removed this possibility for those arriving after 19 July 2013, irrespective of their refugee status.

Since 2001 (notwithstanding a brief gap between 2007 and 2012), Australia has been at the forefront of dismantling the right to seek asylum, leading the world in shifting its responsibilities for assessing protection claims and providing protection to refugees to poor third countries, and then denying any ongoing responsibility, despite continuing to bankroll the regime to the tune of \$14.35 billion over the last 15 years. Papua New Guinea and Nauru were sites of brutal detention of the people deported by Australia, with the immense harm that resulted, including deaths, well documented. A number of other countries are now pursuing the 'Australian Solution'.



People held in detention on Manus Island and on Nauru organised many protests and acts of resistance, raising awareness about the appalling conditions and treatment they were subjected to.

“The sole point of offshore detention is cruelty - it is a system that relies on devising conditions that are worse than the harm that refugees are fleeing.” David Burke, legal director at the Human Rights Law Centre. [link](#)

A new chapter in Australia's Story of Shame:

Since October 2025 Nauru began a new financial arrangement to 'receive' people deported by Australia and is in the process of becoming Australia's offshore island prison.