



President: Stuart McMillan

General Secretary: Colleen Geyer

18 August 2017

The Hon. Peter Dutton, MP
Minister for Immigration and Border Protection
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Dutton,

There comes a point when a disciplined approach to maintaining the integrity of Australia's borders becomes cruel and inhumane, and even obsessive in its implementation.

That point has well and truly come.

I believe that the Australian Government has responsibilities to the people on Manus Island, beyond simply turfing them out, into the vagaries of life in the wider community there.

It is time to either bring them here or urgently find some humane resolution; the imperative being dealing with people humanely. Those who are being assessed for resettlement in the USA could be brought to mainland Australia and supported temporarily in the community until they are given visas.

At some point, the same issue will arise at Nauru, and with the people brought to mainland Australia from Manus Island and Nauru for medical treatment and now in limbo.

Besides operating an expensive border maintenance system, it's not apparent to the Australian population that anything meaningful has been done with Indonesia to deal with the thousands of asylum seekers in their country.

Has the government and your department advanced regional principles for

- non-refoulement,
- managing the returning of asylum seekers no longer in direct flight to the safe transit country from which they have just departed
- processing and protection of UNHCR certified refugees
- resettlement of proven refugees?

Has anything proactive been done by the Australian Government regarding the situation of refugees in the region?

It's time we showed some humane leadership.

In 2015, the Uniting Church in Australia sent your office our Policy Statement, "*Shelter from the Storm*". It outlines the principles we believe a country such as Australia seeks to be and should operate by. It is available on our website at <http://unitingjustice.org.au/refugees-and-asylum-seekers/uca-statements/item/1105-shelter-from-the-storm>

We stand ready to support you.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart McMillan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr. Stuart McMillan
President, Uniting Church in Australia

Rev. Myung Hwa Park
Moderator, New South Wales/A.C.T. Synod

Rev. Thresi Mauboy Wohangara
Moderator, Northern Synod

Rev. David Baker
Moderator, Queensland Synod

Rev. Sue Ellis
Moderator, South Australia Synod

Rev. Sharon Hollis
Moderator, Victoria and Tasmania Synod

Rev. Steve Francis
Moderator, Western Australia Synod