

In 2016 a small number of people seeking asylum were evacuated from Nauru and sent to Australia in need of medical care and support.

Many of these people were experiencing complex health needs in addition to the trauma and persecution they had faced on their journeys to Australia.

The Federal Government is now seeking to further punish this small group of people by ceasing their income and accommodation support and transferring them to six-month bridging visas.

These bridging visas provide Australian work rights, however the people impacted by this decision have little prospects of securing employment – many are dealing with health concerns, have no local work history and little support networks or contacts which are vital to making a job prospect a reality.

This decision is needlessly cruel and will push already marginalized people further towards destitution.

The decision will also further stretch the limited resources of Australian charities who are already showing the type of compassion and leadership missing from our Federal Government.

The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA), Jesuit Social Services and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS Australia) jointly declare that:

- People seeking asylum in Australia must continue to have access to basic income support
- The Federal Government must permanently resolve the status of all asylum seekers in Australia's care both in the community and in regional processing centres offshore.

Australia has long prided itself on being a country that gives people a 'fair go' however our treatment of people seeking asylum, and this particular decision, are far from fair.

As a nation we must focus on supporting, not punishing, people seeking asylum.