

8 April 2020

The Hon Peter Dutton MP
Minister for Home Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Refugees and Asylum Seekers – COVID-19

I write to request that you urgently amend provisions for refugees and asylum seekers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing far reaching disruption across the community and economy. I welcome the range of stimulus and support packages from all governments during this crisis, however I am concerned that a number of people are falling through the cracks and are at risk of hardship, serious illness and homelessness.

The Commonwealth Department of Health has identified people in immigration detention facilities, particularly those transferred from offshore facilities to Australia for medical treatment and those detained long-term as at high risk. People seeking asylum living in the community without access to financial support and Medicare are at great risk for COVID-19 and may not present for testing or treatment if they risk arrest, detention or deportation. Others whose visa status has not been determined face similar risks.

People in these situations cannot adhere to public health requirements for increased hygiene measures, self-isolation and social distancing. This puts them and others with whom they come into contact at risk.

I support community calls to move people out of crowded shared accommodation in detention and bring remaining refugees from PNG and Nauru to Australia. People on Temporary Protection or Safe Haven Enterprise visas should not have their status penalised during the tight COVID-19 restrictions and need access to advice and support. I support calls for access to financial aid and Medicare for these groups.

Could you please urgently review provisions for refugees and asylum seekers during the COVID-19 pandemic and inform me what action you will take?

Yours sincerely



Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney
CC: Federal Member for Sydney; Member for Wentworth

