

**WOMEN CLIMBERS TAKE 'LET THEM STAY'
MESSAGE TO NEW HEIGHTS IN MELBOURNE.**

**Friday 19th February 2016
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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In an escalation of the campaign to stop the deportation of 267 refugees back to Nauru, two women have scaled the Arts Centre building in central Melbourne and have unfurled a banner reading “#LetThemStay”.

Hannah Patchett, 22, and Katherine Woskett, 25, are currently occupying the 162 metre spire, and have been there since the early hours of the morning.

Gaye Demanuele, a refugee activist from inner Melbourne, said “It’s been a week since doctors at Lady Cilento hospital stood up against a policy that is unjust and is in contravention of international human rights law. These 267 people are still living with a daily fear of being taken without notice.”

“The community has spoken loudly, with doctors, lawyers, and other professionals across Australia condemning the deportation, yet both sides of politics are refusing to listen. Clearly, the Australian people support the call to let them stay.”

The protest comes just days after the government retracted a promise to give at least 72 hours notice before deporting the asylum seekers, making consultation with lawyers and advocates incredibly difficult. It sparked more protest, with a banner drop yesterday on Brisbane’s Goodwill Bridge that read “Let Them Stay”, where four people were arrested.

Ms Patchett said, “We stand in solidarity refugees and with the staff at Lady Cilento Hospital in Brisbane. A policy of indefinite detention in offshore prison camps is morally reprehensible, and the public won’t stand for it.”

“The Australian government can expect mounting protest until they listen to the people they are supposed to be representing and close these prison camps.”

Footage from last week’s Melbourne bridge protest can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/166696300034817/videos/946592165378556/>

Twitter: #LetThemStay #CloseTheCamps