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PROTECTING REFUGEE HEALTH

Offshore refugee camps pose major risks to refugees' health. The Greens will establish independent medical and me

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Conditions in Australia's offshore refugee camps are harsh and dangerously inadequate, with no safeguards f
While offshore detention is in place, the Greens will establish an Independent Health Advisory Panel of medic
public oversight and rigorously monitor the needs and wellbeing of vulnerable people sent by Australia to Nau
The Independent Health Advisory Panel would be selected from a pool of experts nominated by Australia's pe

The Panel would be self-directed in the nature of its investigations, have access to all offshore facilities and pe
report directly to the Parliament every six months.

The Panel would be tasked with reporting on the health conditions inside detention camps, investigating defici
improving the medical and mental health care that refugees sent offshore can access.

**PROTECT
REFUGEE
HEALTH.**

**An independent advisory
panel to monitor the mental
and physical health of those
in detention.**



> REFUGEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The old parties are risking the health and wellbeing of thousands of refugees, including children, by continuing to detain them in offshore detention camps in Nauru and Papua New Guinea. A caring nation looks after people fleeing persecution and their physical and mental health needs.

In the rush to set up cruel detention camps and slum cities, there is no plan for independent oversight. The government is committed to dumping all refugees who come by boat out-of-sight, out-of-mind in the poorest nation in the world with no medical and mental health needs.

Reports from whistle-blowers and the UNHCR already tell us that conditions in the camps are harsh and there is no transparency about what is happening in Australia's name.

> SAFEGUARDING THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian Greens want to put a stop to offshore detention altogether. But while it is in place, Australia must ensure the health and wellbeing of refugees we send to detention camps. There must be special oversight of the health and wellbeing of the traumatised people.

The Greens will establish an independent panel of medical and mental health experts to provide transparency and oversight of the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people sent by Australia to Nauru and PNG.

The Independent Health Advisory Panel would:

- be selected from a pool of experts nominated by Australia's peak medical, psychiatric and psychological bodies;
- be self-directed in the nature of their investigations;
- have access to all offshore facilities and personnel;
- be independent of the Minister and report directly to the Parliament every six months.

The Panel would be tasked with reporting on the health conditions inside detention camps, investigating the health and wellbeing of refugees and making recommendations for improving the medical and mental health care that refugees sent offshore can receive.

> FAILING REFUGEES' WELLBEING IS FAILING OUR DUTY

The boat voyage that brings refugees to our shores seeking sanctuary is the last stage in a long and arduous journey. It involves long periods in unsafe conditions, the physical and mental health needs of refugees and the fact that refugees in detention need access to comprehensive, modern health care facilities and services.

We have already seen numerous reports of the damage caused to adults and children by detention in offshore camps. Each report is more worrying than the last, highlighting serious problems with the health and wellbeing of refugees in detention.¹ The history of personal trauma, the hot and steamy conditions, the limited resources in the camps, the remoteness and the high levels of distress about the future, all add up to a dangerously difficult environment for the wellbeing of refugees.

Australia is raiding our foreign aid budget to spend over \$9 billion on offshore asylum seeker camps.

Australia is raising our foreign aid budget to spend over \$6 billion on offshore asylum seeker management commercial contractors.ⁱⁱ Given the horror stories emerging from the detention camps, this arrangement and oversight of the Independent Health Advisory Panel is urgently needed. Now that Labor is commencing unaccompanied minors in Nauru, rigorous health oversight are essential.

Australia recognises that people have a right to health care. We have a duty to look after the basic health of people being sent offshore, the first step should have been to establish an expert advisory panel to monitor conditions as recommended by the Houston Panel.ⁱⁱⁱ

Despite public promises by the Government that a degree of health oversight would be provided, the reality of the detention so far.^{iv} The Greens are not willing to leave refugee health and well-being to chance.

i Joint Select Committee on Australia's Immigration Detention Network, Final Report 2012; <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/12/united-kingdom-visit-to-manus-island>, Visit to Manus Island, Papua New Guinea 11-13 June 2013

ii Economic Statement, released by Treasurer the Hon Chris Bowen MP, August 2013.

iii The Report of the Expert Panel into Asylum Seekers, para 3.59.

iv <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jul/15/manus-island-committee-never-met>

 [Download the Refugee Health Initiative \(377Kb\)](#)

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