

# Rural Australians for Refugees

#KidsOffNauru Canberra Convergence Tues 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Media Release

**RURAL AUSTRALIANS FOR REFUGEES  
CONVERGE ON CANBERRA  
CALLING FOR  
AMNESTY ON OFFSHORE DETENTION &  
KIDS OFF NAURU  
Tuesday 16 October 2018, 10am onwards  
Rally Starts at Noon In Federation Mall**

**#RuralAustralians4Refugees  
#KidsOffNauru**

Over 30 Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) groups from around the nation, including Leeton, Biloela and Cairns will be joined by other refugee agency representatives and supporters to converge for a major rally in Canberra on **Tuesday, October 16 2018**, Commencing 12 midday at Federation Mall

To let politicians know that rural Australians do not support cruel policies which punish children and their families.

RAR's goal is to focus federal Parliament's attention on the plight of asylum seekers and refugees who remain on Nauru and Manus Island, and particularly the need to provide homes and safety for children and their families either in Australia or in another country that would *welcome* them.

## **Who:**

RAR Groups attending include: Eurobodalla RAC, Bega, McMillan for Refugees (Gippsland), Ballarat, Aireys Inlet, Bellarine, Healesville, Mansfield, Benalla, Wangaratta, Beechworth, Wodonga, Albury, Newcastle/Hunter Region, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Southern Highlands, Queanbeyan, Armidale, Ballina, Biloela, Cairns.

A busload of year 11 students will be attending from St Francis College Leeton. Accompanying the students will be teachers and the Mayor of Leeton. The students will be presenting a letter to Sussan Ley Member for Farrer and Michael McCormack Deputy Prime Minister and Member for Riverina protesting about the 'kids on Nauru' and urging the government to reconsider their policy.

Bendigo, Armidale, Bairnsdale, Bellingen/Nambucca Heads and Cairns are having rallies at 12 noon concurrently on the 16th in solidarity with the rally in Canberra.

The #HomeToBilo group are also represented.

Dr Caroline de Costa, Dr Chris Jones, Uki RAR and Denmark RAR are contributing messages of support.

The rally has been advertised in Canberra.

Mums for Refugees will be attending and speaking and Canberra Pedal Power will be cycling around the Parliament Circuit.

**Visuals:**

Southern Highlands is bringing their giant banner of a child on Nauru plus 100 cut out children for participants to carry.

Biloela will be bringing cut out cockatoos (representing Biloela and the bush).

Get Up is providing additional posters of children on Nauru.

Schoolchildren from Leeton

**When:**

Meeting on the lawns of Federation Mall behind old parliament house at 12 midday.

12.30pm walk up Federation Mall to the lawns in front of Parliament House for the Welcome to Country ceremony and the speeches.

The rally will conclude at 2.00pm.

**Speakers:**

Aunty Violet Sheridan Welcome to Country

The Very Reverend Peter MacLeod Miller Anglican Archdeacon of Hume

Dr Paul Bauert, Paediatrician from Darwin

John Falzon, Former CEO

Dr Sue Parker, Specialist in trauma to children  
Angela Fredericks Biloela

ACT Govt Representative

Poem 'Nauru' Christian Bashimbe of Wodonga (formerly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo)

The Mayor of Leeton Paul Mayton

Patrick Draper and Charlie Reilly,

Students from St Francis College Leeton

Music and a parliamentary courtyard press conference are also mooted.

### **Timing:**

We have chosen this week because Parliament reconvenes and it leads to the Wentworth by-election on October 20.

The parliamentary sitting week (October 15-18) ahead of the Wentworth by-election presents a one-off opportunity for concerned Australians to build voice on this issue.

RAR particularly notes the influence of refugee issues among Wentworth electors as reported in *The Guardian* on Oct 6 <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/oct/06/most-wentworth-voters-want-auru-children-brought-to-australia>

Rural Australians For Refugees is co-ordinating the rally on the **lawns between Old Parliament House and Parliament House from 12:00 to 2.00pm.**

### **Why:**

The focus of the rally will be *Australians say 'No' to kids in detention* — with a call to the federal government to expedite the safe resettlement of asylum seekers and refugees from Nauru and Manus and so staunch the deep human, reputational and economic costs of maintaining the government's current regional offshore processing policy.

The government is facing growing appeals from cross bench MPs, the community and credible media to change its offshore processing policy. The intervention of Australian Medical Association president Tony Bartone, with his recent open letter to the Prime Minister in which he asked the government to respond rapidly and compassionately to the humanitarian emergency faced by asylum seekers and refugees on Nauru, has given significant impetus to the national discussion.

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## #KidsOffNauru

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