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| Labor for Refugees New South Wales |

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| **15 February 2023****Dear****Welcome to a new year!****Our first online meeting for 2023 takes place next Wednesday 22nd at 6.30pm. If you are not a member, please join.****The link to the minutes of our last meeting in November 2022 is**[*L4RMinutes23Nov22*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=23c48033f2&e=f705cf268c)**The good news - temporary protection visas****Late last year, in our newsletter, we reported that L4R national representatives met with Immigration Minister Andrew Giles in Canberra on Monday 26 September  2022**[*L4RmtgImmigMin26Sep22REPORT*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=6466708a58&e=f705cf268c)**with a follow-up meeting in Sydney at the end of 2022 by our National Co-Convenor Shane Prince. We raised many issues with the Minister, one of them being the election promise by Labor, to  move those people on temporary visas onto permanent visas.****The temporary protection policy was applied to anyone who had arrived by boat to seek protection in Australia before 19 July 2013 and had not been given refugee status prior to the change of government in September 2013.****On Monday 13 February 2023, the government announced that it would finally honour its election promise to the 19,000 people who are currently on a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or on a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV). They will now be able to apply for a newly created permanent residency visa called Resolution of Status (RoS).****This is a huge win for people who are impacted by this announcement.****Those granted a new visa will have the same rights and benefits as all other permanent residents, and will be immediately eligible for social security payments, access to the NDIS and higher education assistance.****They will also be permitted to apply to become citizens once they meet the necessary citizenship requirements and will be able to sponsor family members to come to Australia.****The Refugee Council of Australia's media release on this announcement, follows**[**here**](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=25edd40389&e=f705cf268c)**The bad news - contract with MTC for Nauru****Labor for Refugees has been lobbying since August last year for the government not to enter into a contract for Nauru with MTC Australia, an Australian arm of a US private prisons company.****Not only does this security company have a reputation for cruelty, but it was taken to court by the Arizona Governor who wished to cancel an MTC contract for ‘a culture of disorganisation, disengagement and disregard for state policies’.  MTC has also had action taken against it for its treatment of women and people of colour in its facilities, including unconscionable periods of solitary confinement and sexual assault.****We also pointed out in our letter to the Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil, that we expected the government to abide by its own Platform, which states that before entering into such a contract, consultation should take place with the relevant trade union.That prompted us to ask the United Workers Union (UWU), to join us in lobbying the government not to enter into a contract with MTC.  The UWU's National President Jo Schofield agreed and stated the following in her letter to the Minister*“that the Home affairs Dept immediately pause any negotiations with Managing and Training Corporation so that more suitable management may be found”.***  **We did not receive a response to our two letters and neither did the UWU.  It seems that this is the way the Home Affairs Dept conducts its business, that is, if the Minister does not like what she reads in a letter, she ignores it.****The bad news, is that the temporary contract entered into with MTC, was extended until September 2025.   This $350 million contract covers the potential extension of offshore detention on Nauru until September 2025.  This is a blow.****To make things worse, on the 7 February last, the government quickly put through legislation to extend offshore detention of refugees and asylum seekers on Nauru, thus retaining our cruel and inhumane system of the offshore detention of people seeking asylum.****The 65 individuals who remain on Nauru, have suffered nine years of mistreatment, isolation and medical neglect. Fourteen people have died in offshore detention since 2013 and hundreds have sustained permanent psychological injury from their treatment by the Australian government.****Labor for Refugees wrote to both the Immigration Minister and Home Affairs Minister expressing dismay at the Government’s Instrument of Designation of the Republic of Nauru as a Regional Processing Country approved by the Parliament.****Good News - family reunions****For years, Australia has kept thousands of refugee families apart as a cruel deterrence measure.****On 10 February 2023, the Albanese Government abolished Ministerial Direction 80, reversing a Coalition policy which intentionally denied thousands of people fleeing persecution the basic human right to live in safety with their families.****Over 3,000 families have been kept apart by the policy, with almost 1,000 waiting since 2013.Lives were put on hold, parents missed out on seeing their children grow up. These families will never get those years back.  The vast majority of people impacted are Afghanistan-Australian families.****Bad news - returning former detainees to detention****Labor for Refugees sent a letter to Immigration Minister Andrew Giles and Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil on 12 February, 2023 expressing dismay at the Government introducing the Migration Amendment (Aggregate Sentences) Bill 2023 into the Senate earlier that week, that would, in effect, if legislated by the Parliament, return former detainees to detention. The Bill was introduced in the Senate on Tuesday 7 February.  Since then, we have established that the Bill was passed on the 13 February by both Houses.****The Liberal-National Party’s amendments to make the Bill more draconian, failed.  The Independents’ objections failed.****We are very disappointed with this outcome.****Please see the letter we sent to the immigration Minister, which has the same wording as the letter we sent to the Home affairs Minister and which explains why we opposedthe Bill in the first place**[*L4RreBillreturntodetention*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=2ae6c26841&e=f705cf268c)**Labor for Refugees' submission to Treasury - Public Consultation for Budget 2023-24 in May 2023****On 5 December 2022 the Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services**[called for submissions](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=163f8b24cc&e=f705cf268c)**from individuals, businesses and community groups on their views regarding priorities for the 2023‑24 Budget.*****"The 2023-24 Budget will build on the Government’s work to build a better future for Australia. We invite stakeholders to share their submissions for the 2023-24 Budget by Friday 27 January 2023."*****Labor for Refugees took the opportunity to make a submission which you can read at**[*L4RSubmissionBudget23-24inMay23*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=e270849fe4&e=f705cf268c)**It's well worth a read and covers a number of areas where we recommend improvements in the use of taxpayer's money for refugees and people seeking asylum.****Petition EN4784 - Permanent residency for those who come by boat****We endorse and ask for your support for the petition which follows:****Petition ReasonBetween 2012-2014 many thousands of people seeking asylum arrived at Christmas Island and other places by boat. Some were taken to the mainland but others were exiled to Nauru or to Manus Island. As of January 2023, over 100 still languish on Nauru or in PNG. Thousands remain trapped in Community Detention within Australia, or on the merry-go-round of repeating bridging visas, or for the more fortunate, TPV or SHEVs. The resettlements in US or Canada have been a slow drip, not even a trickle. Many years have passed, far too many. Hundreds have given up hope of resettlement, having established friendships here and feeling settled here although denied further education for themselves or their children who have grown up here speaking Australian English. The delay has caused despair, poverty, broken marriages, frustration and incredible boredom for those who are denied the dignity of work opportunities. Many consider themselves as political hostages of the tired and obsolete “Stop the Boats” mantra. Australia’s international reputation has suffered because of these injustices.Petition RequestWe therefore ask the House to, in respect of this group of people, firstly, immediately bring all those remaining in PNG and Nauru to Australia. Secondly, grant all those - from the “legacy caseload”, those on Bridging Visas, those in Community Detention, and those yet to be released from Immigration Detention Centres - permanent residence in Australia by 31 March 2023.****The link to the petition follows:**[**https://www.aph.gov.au/e-petitions/petition/EN4784?fbclid=IwAR04gsgApbOY9Sn09QQzASOvsm86AheKmP5\_J23HA6Cqj9gBECXgAtB4y74**](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=325e15165b&e=f705cf268c)**Please sign it and spread the word.****Wanted - Volunteer teachers for online classes****The Cisarua Learning Centre (CRLC) located in Indonesia, is an Australian Registered Benevolent Institution which supports refugee-led initiatives in Indonesia and around the world. It is appealing for help.****For the last few years the refugees in Indonesia have been building an advanced learning program for students who ‘graduate’ from the CRLC. The goal is for the refugees to obtain a school leaving level certificate which is recognised internationally and the program is taught online.****Requirements are:**·       **a good command over written and spoken english**·       **able to commit for one hour per week for a minimum of six months**·       **good internet access and a computer with camera and microphone****If you are interested, you can email****sharon@cisarulearning.com****and a recruitment form will be sent to you.****The link to the Cisarua Learning Centre is**[**https://www.cisarualearning.com**](https://www.cisarualearning.com)**Campaigning in 2023****Please attend our meeting next week if you can, as we will be deciding on our campaign for 2023.  There is a proposal on the table, to support a motion that we should promote among Labor branches, to be taken to the National Labor Conference in August this year.**  **Regards****Nizza SianoSecretary L4R NSWemail:***contact@labor4refugees.com*

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