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| **19 October 2023** **You are invited to attend our next meetingOur next meeting will be held on WEDNESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2023 AT 6.30PM.****Please join Labor for Refugees to receive the Zoom link for our meeting.The Minutes of our last meeting follow**[*MinutesL4RNSW-ACT27Sep23*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=650ae3f0f4&e=ba8211a97d) **Papua New Guinea and Nauru - update****PAPUA NEW GUINEARefugee advocates are calling on both the Australian and PNG governments to urgently investigate the secret 2021 deal struck by the Morrison government and PNG governments for services to refugees left in PNG by Australia.****Australia detained refugees and asylum-seekers on Manus island in PNG for more than six years. When the camp closed, they remaining men were dumped in Port Moresby, the PNG capital.At the end of 2021, the Morrison government cut off support, a policy that Labor has continued.There are now some 70 refugees left in Port Moresby, many badly damaged by Labor's cruelty.Suspected rorting of the contracts has left unpaid debts of millions of Australian dollars to refugee service providers and threatens to see the eviction of Australia’s refugees from PNG hotels.Read more**[in *Sydney Morning Herald* here](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=1371537fd2&e=ba8211a97d)**If Australia fails to resume funding Papua New Guinea’s (PNG) humanitarian program, some 70 refugees and people seeking asylum held in PNG for more than 10 years will be deported to Australia, PNG Chief Migration Officer Stanis Hulahau said.  A hospital in Port Moresby claims it is owed some $40 million while security firms, motels and other service providers claim they are owed $6–$8 million each. Australia’s Home Affairs department said it was a matter for the PNG government. Refugees and people seeking asylum held in PNG recently received eviction notices.Members may recall that Labor for Refugees wrote to the Minister for Home Affairs, Clare O'Neil on 9 July 2023, asking her to transfer the dozen ill men being treated in a private hospital in Port Moresby to Australia.  The fact is that the hospital in Port Moresby does not have access to the wealth of experience and talent of specialised Australia medical services for refugees, developed over the last 20 years of detention policy in our country, including the study of the trauma experienced by refugees.  Bearing in mind that we put them there in the first place, Australia must not wash its hands of the responsibility we bear towards these sick men. NAURUAfter we celebrated the fact that no refugees remained in Nauru, Australia reportedly intercepted and transferred 11 people arriving by sea to the Nauru Regional Processing Centre (NRPC) in September, months after the ‘last’ detainees were removed.  International Health and Medical Services (IHMS) staff were reportedly engaged to provide health services to the cohort in Nauru. The federal government in May said the NRPC would be maintained in abeyance at $350 million per year as a contingency for any new arrivals by sea.  This is an obscene amount allocated to punish those people who are desperate enough to risk making dangerous boat journeys in an effort to seek asylum in our country.** **Australian government faces most significant legal challenge to indefinite immigration detention in decades** **The High Court will next month hear a landmark legal challenge to the Australian government’s power to hold people in immigration detention indefinitely.Nearly 20 years ago, the High Court upheld the constitutional validity of indefinite immigration detention in *Al-Kateb v Godwin.*Four of the seven judges of the Court held that, provided the government maintained an *intention*to eventually remove a person from Australia, they could be held in detention indefinitely until that removal took place.Subsequent attempts to overturn that watershed authority have failed. As a result, the time spent by people in immigration detention has increased steadily over time.Today, the average period spent by people in immigration detention is 709 days. There are 127 people in immigration detention today who have been there for over 5 years. Many of those people are stateless or owed protection by Australia, meaning that they cannot be removed.The legal challenge, brought by a person referred to by the pseudonym *NZYQ,*will argue that *Al-Kateb*was wrongly decided, and that it is unlawful and unconstitutional to continue to detain a person who cannot be removed from Australia. The Human Rights Law Centre and UNSW’s Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law have jointly applied to be heard as *amici curiae –*friends of the court – to extend the argument to people who cannot be removed for the foreseeable future, such as refugees.The hearing will begin in the High Court on 7 November.****Abolition of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) - the caseload** **One of the commitments made by the Labor government, is to replace the AAT with a new, fit-for-purpose federal administrative review body, to be named the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART).This new body is meant to be user-focused, efficient, accessible, independent and fair.** **The reform to Australia’s system of administrative review aims to:*** **implement a transparent and merit-based appointments process**
* **appoint additional members to address existing backlogs**
* **implement sustainable funding arrangements**
* **implement a single, updated case management system to address critical business risks**
* **introduce procedural efficiencies and process improvements**
* **implement support services and emphasise early resolution where possible.**

 **The federal government appointed 54 additional members to the AAT, following upon 39 new appointments announced in September, as part of a commitment to address the existing caseload, particularly in the Migration and Refugee Division.  New members will commence being appointed between 9 October 2023 and 5 February 2024.  All Members appointed through this process will transition to the new administrative review body, the Administrative Review Tribunal.Hopefully, this will speed up the processing of the existing caseload \**\* The Legacy Caseload is a group of approximately 30,000 asylum seekers who arrived in Australia by boat prior to 1 January 2014 and were permitted to remain in Australia in order to lodge applications for substantive visas, but had not had their status resolved by this date.*****Family Reunions** **At our last L4R meeting, members discussed the reforms proposed in the recommendations made by the SCALES Community Legal Centre and Murdoch University Law Clinic (SCALES).  The report dealt with family separation and family reunion for refugees.****It was resolved that we write to the Immigration Minister Andrew Giles, urging him to adopt the recommendations made in the SCALES report.  To read the key proposals we recommended to the Minister, see the following letter sent to him on 5 October**[*L4RFamilyReunions-Giles5Oct23*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=88e57c09b5&e=ba8211a97d)**Asylum Seekers Centre presents:****Speaking Asylum: 30 Years of Stories23 NOVEMBER 2023****Join the Asylum Seekers Centre at the Seymour Centre, Sydney to celebrate 30 years of the ASC.   Join themfor an evening of incredible stories including:*** **Wendy Sharpe & Mostafa ‘Moz’ Azimitibar in conversation about the ability for art to carry a message of love and hope, even while addressing hard topics.**
* **Craig Foster in conversation about the role of sport in defending human rights with an athlete with refugee experience.**
* **Michael Mohammed Ahmad, founder of the Sweatshop Literacy Movement, introducing new writing by people with refugee experience. Writers, Arash and Thouraya will read from their work that is included in Sweatshop’s newest anthology.**
* **Parissa Tosif, one half of musical duo Vallis Alps, shares a special music performance. As children of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, Vallis Alps have their own passions and stories to share.**
* **MC and Asylum Seekers Centre board member Abang Anade Othow will guide us through the evening.**
* **Hear from ASC CEO Frances Rush about the ASC’s vision for the future.**

**After the event, they will gather as a community under the twinkling lights of the Seymour Centre courtyard and celebrate 30 years of storytelling, community and welcome. This special evening is proudly supported by the Seymour Centre and Gilbert + Tobin.Purchase a ticket for a person seeking asylum**[here](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=6d58c40bca&e=ba8211a97d)**. Even if you can't make it, you can contribute towards the ticket of someone supported by the ASC.** **Treehouse TheatrePlease support the good work being carried out by the Treehouse Theatre and attend one of its performances this November.****A flyer for a theatre  Description automatically generated**[**Buy Chippendale Tickets**](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=a9a7d752a9&e=ba8211a97d)**I look forward to seeing you at our online meeting next Wednesday.**

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**Regards****Nizza SianoSecretary L4R NSWemail:***contact@labor4refugees.com*

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