



Mr Bill Shorten M.P.
Leader of the Opposition
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Dear Mr. Shorten,

I write on behalf of the Justice Committee of Catholic Religious Australia (CRA). CRA represents over 140 religious congregations across Australia with approximately 5,500 Catholic religious, women and men throughout the nation, as well as many thousands of people working in organisations run by religious institutes. Our members and their lay colleagues serve in education, health care and social services. We work with First Australians, refugees and asylum seekers, people struggling to survive on the margins of society and many others in need of assistance. The members of CRA and their colleagues, many of whom engage on a daily basis with refugees and asylum seekers are acutely aware of the maltreatment, the injustice and the sheer inhumanity of our current dealings with refugees and asylum seekers – we want this to change.

With a Federal election due in May and the very real possibility that your party may be voted into power we ask that you urgently review Labor's immigration and asylum seeker policy. It is not acceptable, in a country that prides itself on the "fair go", that celebrates its multiculturalism and assures its citizens that the spirit and letter of international law are kept, to keep people on off-shore islands for prolonged periods, render others stateless and cut benefits to the most vulnerable. We hope for significant changes if you are voted into government.

If a thorough and searching review of Labor's immigration and refugee policy is to take place the selection of the Minister, or Shadow Minister for Immigration, whom we hope will be independent of Home Affairs and Border Security, is of the utmost importance. The Justice Committee of CRA has frequent dealings with Ministers and Shadow Ministers of Immigration and we look forward to working with a Minister who understands the push factors which force people to flee their countries and is able to respond with positive, compassionate and constructive policies.

We are, as always, happy to meet with you or your representatives to discuss these issues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Libby Rogerson ibvm'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Libby Rogerson ibvm
for CRA Justice Committee
21 March 2018