



PO Box A147
Sydney South NSW 1235
[www:alhr.org.au](http://www.alhr.org.au)

15 November 2017

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2000

The Hon Bill Shorten MP
Leader of the Opposition
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2000

By email: Malcolm.Turnbull.mp@aph.gov.au

By email: Bill.Shorten.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition,

How will history view today?

On this historic day for marriage equality in Australia, Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (ALHR) warmly congratulates you both for your strong, moral leadership in committing to the rapid passing of marriage equality legislation that enables a free and fair future for all Australians. We continue to trust that such legislation will be passed promptly and free from exemptions that would protect the discriminatory aspects of some religions and attempt to legalise discrimination which is outlawed today.

Yet, unhappily, when in later years we reflect on this day, there will always be a 'but'... that leadership was at the same time not shown by either major Australian party leader in relation to the terrible, tragic and yet entirely preventable situation of the traumatised refugees in Australia's care and control on Manus Island and Nauru.

That fair and compassionate Australians must rely on New Zealand Prime Minister Ardern in demonstrating ethical compassion and concern for the detained refugees by stepping forward to provide essential services for them is not only a matter of shame for Australia but casts a long, deep shadow on this otherwise happy day.

We note that the Senate passed a motion on Tuesday afternoon calling on the Prime Minister to accept New Zealand's offer and that Mr Shorten has also urged Mr Turnbull to reconsider.

Is there no room for Australian leadership on this issue so that history can describe this day as a turning point in every respect? Do you want this horrendous blight on the good name of Australia to be your political legacy?

We would appreciate meeting with you urgently to discuss solutions to the crisis on Manus and Nauru.


We look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Benedict Coyne', written in a cursive style.

Benedict Coyne
President

president@alhr.org.au

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Kerry Weste', written in a cursive style.

Kerry Weste
Vice President

vicepresident@alhr.org.au

ALHR was established in 1993 and is a national association of Australian solicitors, barristers, academics, judicial officers and law students who practise and promote international human rights law in Australia. ALHR has active and engaged National, State and Territory committees and specialist thematic committees. Through advocacy, media engagement, education, networking, research and training, ALHR promotes, practices and protects universally accepted standards of human rights throughout Australia and overseas.