

9 September 2025

**The Hon. Tony Burke MP**

Minister for Home Affairs, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Burke,

**Re: NZYQ Cohort and Recent Legislation Regarding Deportation to Nauru**

I write to you on behalf of Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA), the national body representing hundreds of Catholic social service sites across the entire country, working in communities from remote regions to major cities to support vulnerable people and communities.

We acknowledge the challenging position the Government has faced following the High Court's decision in *NZYQ v Minister for Immigration*. We fully respect the authority, will, and intent of the Parliament in enacting this legislation, and recognise and respect its sovereign power to make determinations on these matters. We understand the Government's responsibility to make difficult decisions regarding immigration policy and national security.

However, we feel compelled to express our deep concern regarding the recent legislation facilitating the deportation of the NZYQ cohort to Nauru. This concern stems from our commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, which emphasises the inherent dignity of every human person, regardless of their status or circumstances.

Minister, while we acknowledge the Government's security responsibilities, the re-establishment of offshore detention for the NZYQ cohort risks further international criticism at a time when Australia is preparing for its upcoming Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

The removal of key procedural fairness protections means that decisions about detention and deportation may be made without adequate transparency, review, or accountability – exposing the Government to legal challenge and reputational risk. Equally troubling are the implications for family separation, with Australian citizen children at risk of being torn from their parents and long-term community ties severed. Offshore transfer to Nauru not only compounds these harms but also highlights systemic gaps in healthcare and child protection.

We are particularly concerned about the inadequate healthcare facilities in Nauru, which lack specialist services required for those with complex medical conditions, chronic illnesses, and mental health needs. Additionally, many in the cohort have established critical social support networks in Australia, including community connections, employment relationships, and educational pathways, which would be severed through deportation. The disruption to mental health treatment continuity, educational progress for young people, and economic stability represents significant humanitarian concerns beyond the legal aspects of this matter.

Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that solidarity calls us to recognise the interconnectedness of all people and our shared responsibility to one another. The Catholic tradition has long upheld that migration policies, while respecting a nation's right to regulate its borders, must always prioritise the dignity and wellbeing of the human person.

Catholic Social Services Australia, with our extensive national network, is uniquely positioned to play a constructive role in developing a more sustainable and humane alternative. With deep community reach, trusted service delivery, and proven capacity in settlement, family support and case management, we can partner with Government to create tailored community-based supervision and support arrangements. Such collaboration would offer a "win-win" pathway addressing legitimate security concerns, ensuring compliance with Australia's legal and human rights obligations, and demonstrating to the international community that Australia can meet its border responsibilities while also upholding dignity, compassion and family unity.

Our member organisations across Australia work daily with vulnerable migrants. We witness firsthand their struggles, their contributions to Australian society, and their deep connections to communities and families here. Many, including those from the NZYQ cohort, have lived in Australia for years, even decades, and have Australian citizen children and other family members.

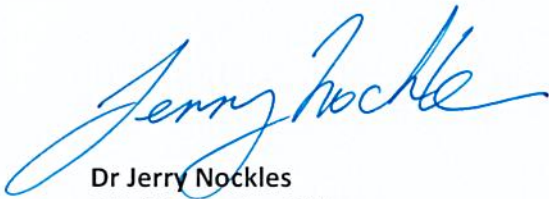
We propose a collaborative approach that would include:

- Community-based supervision programs with appropriate reporting requirements
- Tailored case management addressing both security and welfare needs
- Family preservation services that keep Australian families intact
- Partnerships with service organisations with proven track records in complex case support
- Transparent accountability mechanisms that protect both national security and individual rights

We stand ready to convene discussions with relevant stakeholders, including other faith-based and community organisations, to develop constructive alternatives that better reflect Australia's humanitarian traditions while addressing legitimate governmental concerns.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. We look forward to the opportunity to work together on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr Jerry Nockles**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Catholic Social Services Australia

*“Faced with frightening scenarios and the possibility of global devastation, it is important that there be a growing desire in people’s hearts for a future of peace and of respect for the dignity of all. Such a future is essential to God’s plan for humanity and the rest of creation.”*  
– Pope Leo XIV, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2025