

Manus Island Detention Centre

The following statement can be attributed to Michael Colbran QC, President, Law Council of Australia:

- The Law Council of Australia is gravely concerned by reports of violence at the Manus Island Detention Centre in Papua New Guinea (PNG), resulting in the death of one asylum seeker and injuries to 77 asylum seekers.
- The Law Council acknowledges and welcomes the establishment of inquiries into the Manus Island Detention Centre by the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection.
- The Law Council considers that those seeking asylum in Australia, irrespective of where they are being processed and detained, should be treated with dignity and fairness in accordance with Australian and International Standards and that their health and safety is paramount.
- While recognising the challenges that this Government faces as it attempts to address numerous deficiencies in Australia's immigration detention network, the Law Council notes the outcomes of the Inquiry by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights into the Regional Processing Act which identified that the measures as currently implemented on Manus Island (and Nauru) carry a significant risk of being incompatible with a range of human rights.
- Independent oversight and scrutiny of the standards of detention is important in ensuring that Australia's immigration system operates effectively and efficiently, complies with rule of law principles, and protects the most basic rights of the individual, including the right to be treated with dignity and fairness.
- The Law Council has previously called upon successive Governments to ensure that Australia adheres to rule of law principles and international human rights obligations when entering into arrangements with other countries for the purposes of processing protection claims and resettling those found to be in need of protection.
- The Law Council will monitor the inquiry and would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of solutions to ensure that effective responses to immigration challenges do not infringe the relevant principles underpinning the Rule of Law as it applies in this country or depart from Australia's international human rights responsibilities.

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