



STATEMENT

**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND BORDER
PROTECTION
MEMBER FOR CORIO**

**REPORTS OF A REGIONAL RESETTLEMENT ARRANGEMENT WITH THE
PHILIPPINES**

There are reports in today's media about the Liberal Government negotiating a refugee resettlement arrangement with the Government of the Philippines.

In keeping with the secrecy of the Abbott/Turnbull Government when it comes to border protection, Minister Dutton has refused to confirm whether arrangements have been agreed.

Labor is open to any genuine, sustainable proposal which resettles refugees from Australian funded regional processing centres but we call on the Government to release the full details of the plan to the Australian community.

We want to ensure any proposal offers permanent, safe outcomes for refugees, with access to health, education and settlement services.

It is critical the Government provides a meaningful resettlement plan for the people on Manus and Nauru.

We simply can't let people languish indefinitely within processing facilities.

In seeking full details of this proposal we must not forget it was this Liberal Government that spent \$40 million on the secretive botched Cambodia plan, which has so far resettled only four people from Nauru.

There are also serious questions that need to be answered by the Liberal Government about the resettlement of refugees in Papua New Guinea, given that despite repeated assurances from this Government no one is yet resettled in that country, more than two years after the Regional Resettlement Agreement was signed.

Has the Government abandoned any hope of resettling refugees within Papua New Guinea? If so, this is a comprehensive failure by the Turnbull Government in managing its relationship with Papua New Guinea.

Labor notes the Philippines is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

FRIDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2015