



## STATEMENT

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

#### **THIRD COUNTRY SETTLEMENT MUST BE A PRIORITY**

Following today's High Court decision on offshore processing, the Turnbull Government must immediately secure proper third country settlement options for refugees.

The Abbott / Turnbull Government has failed abysmally in securing any meaningful resettlement plan with a viable third country, instead wasting \$55 million on a botched deal with Cambodia that has resettled only 3 people.

Over the last 24 months, media have also reported the Government has held talks to resettle refugees with the countries of Philippines and Kyrgyzstan.

All the while, people have been left to languish in processing centres without any certainty for their future.

There needs to be a credible third country option to resolve the fate of these people. If Peter Dutton is unable to negotiate such a plan, Mr Turnbull or Ms Bishop must personally intervene.

Working with the UNHCR to seek their input about appropriate and viable third party settlement arrangements would be a priority for a future Labor Government.

Without an urgent resolution this Government will be doing enormous damage to this refugee population.

It is critical this Government act now and engage with the UNHCR.

A future Labor Government will play a leadership role in building a regional humanitarian framework in South East Asia to improve the situation of asylum seekers.

A future Labor Government will also increase our funding to the UNHCR to \$450 million over four years, taking Australia to a position where we would be one of the top five global contributors to the agency.

**WEDNESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2016**