



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

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
DOORSTOP INTERVIEW
GEELONG
TUESDAY, 26 APRIL 2016**

SUBJECT/S: PNG Supreme Court ruling on Manus Island Processing Centre.

SHADOW MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION, RICHARD MARLES: The decision of the Supreme Court in Papua New Guinea represents a failure on the part of the Turnbull Government, in its management of Australia's offshore facilities. When Labor was in power, we negotiated a 12 month agreement with PNG for the use of Manus Island as an offshore processing facility, in the expectation that the vast bulk of people would be processed and settled in that period of time, instead we have seen a complete failure on the part of the Turnbull Government to properly negotiate resettlement arrangements with PNG and to negotiate resettlement arrangements with third country options, instead what we have seen is the Turnbull Government waste \$55 million on the negotiation of an agreement in Cambodia which has only applied to one or two people, this is simply not good enough on the part of the Turnbull Government. We need to make sure that the decision of the Supreme Court does not become a green light for the revival of the people smuggling trade and Peter Dutton needs to be in Papua New Guinea tomorrow to sort this issue out.

JOURNALIST: What responsibility does Labor take over these illegal actions given the former Prime Minister signed the agreement with PNG?

MARLES: Well, we negotiated a 12 month agreement with PNG with an expectation that the vast bulk of people would be processed and resettled in that period of time, we never imagined that we would see the better part of a thousand people languish on Manus Island three years down the track. Manus was never intended to be a place of indefinite detention, the issue here is the failure of the Turnbull Government to negotiate resettlement arrangements with PNG firstly, and then to negotiate third country arrangements which would provide an option for the resolution of these people's fate. The Government has got itself into a terrible situation, Peter Dutton needs to be on a plane tomorrow to Port Moresby in order to sort this issue out.

JOURNALIST: What action should the Government now take?

MARLES: It is absolutely critical that Peter Dutton meets with his counterpart in PNG tomorrow, he has got to get on a plane and go up to PNG and work out a resolution to this, we need to hear from the Government about what their contingency is in relation to this situation now that has developed in this way, and we never imagined that there would still be people languishing on Manus in this way, three years down the track. It is an utter failure on the part of the Government that we have got to this point. However it is managed, it is critically important that the decision of the Supreme Court not become a green light for the revival of the people smuggling trade between Java and Christmas Island, that is why it is so important that Peter Dutton goes to Papua New Guinea tomorrow to negotiate a resolution to this issue with the PNG Government.

JOURNALIST: Should the entire offshore detention policy including Nauru now be relooked at in the wake of this?

MARLES: Well offshore processing has played a critical role in bringing an end to the journey between Java and Christmas Island and as a result has played a critical role in bringing an end to deaths at sea, we never want to see that happen again. But, given the decision that has now been made by the PNG Supreme Court, it is absolutely imperative that Peter Dutton get to PNG immediately in order to sort this issue out, it is the Turnbull Government that has got itself into this mess. It is first and foremost a function of this Government's inability to negotiate resettlement arrangements for these people in PNG and in other countries around the world, it was never intended that Manus be a place of indefinite detention, it is now for the Government to resolve this issue and they ought to do it first and foremost by getting Peter Dutton on a plane tomorrow.

ENDS