
AN OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER TONY ABBOTT

from members of Australia's academic
community.

The Hon. Tony Abbott, MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600.

2 March 2014

Dear Prime Minister,

This letter reflects the concerns of Australian academics whose areas of expertise include refugee law; political science; international law; history; psychiatry; psychology; education; social work; criminology; economics; business studies; sociology; social policy; nursing; philosophy; literature; the humanities; medicine; legal studies; journalism studies; sociology; childhood studies; public health, science; community welfare; health care; architecture; music, environmental sciences and human rights.

We believe that the current approach to dealing with asylum seekers arriving by boat, especially off-shore detention and claims determination, is seriously flawed and unsustainable.

It breaches Australia's international legal obligations, including its obligations as a party to the Refugee Convention. It demonstrably harms the physical and psychological health of detainees.

Furthermore, it seriously undermines the status and good name of Australia as an international citizen.

We call on the Australian government to close the detention centres on Manus Island and in Nauru immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Academics from Australian tertiary institutions. (*Signatories overleaf*)

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- Associate Professor Anne Pedersen, Murdoch University
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