

Faith leaders take Nauru concerns to Canberra

CathNews, <http://www.cathnews.com/cathnews/33441-faith-leaders-take-nauru-concerns-to-canberra>, 26 October 2018



The delegation (L-R) Rabbi Shamir Caplan, Sr Libby Rogerson, Imam Alaa Elzokm, Elizabeth Stone, Bishop Philip Huggins and Harold Zweir (CRA)

A delegation of faith leaders has met with Immigration Minister David Coleman and shadow minister Shayne Neumann to discuss the plight of asylum-seeker children on Nauru. Source: Catholic Religious Australia.

Sr Libby Rogerson IBVM represented Catholic Religious Australia at the meeting in Canberra on October 18, along with Bishop Philip Huggins (Anglican Archdiocese of Melbourne), Rabbi Shamir Caplan (Beit Aharon Synagogue Melbourne), Elizabeth Stone (General Secretary National Council of Churches), Imam Alaa Elzokm (Elsedeaq Mosque, Heidelberg) and Harold Zwier (Jewish organiser).

Conscious of the desperation of the people on Nauru and Manus Island, hearing the calls from the Australia Medical Association, non-government and judicial organisations and knowing the work done by faith-based groups, the delegation offered the ministers their insights into finding a solution.

“The ministers listened, and we listened to them – there was, unfortunately, no perceived change in their policies on off-shore processing but they were softening in their attitudes to the children on Nauru,” Sr Libby said.

Mr Neumann was enthusiastic about sending asylum-seekers to New Zealand as soon as possible and he promised to abolish Temporary Protection Visas and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas.

Mr Coleman, who has only had the portfolio for three weeks, attended the meeting with Liberal MP Russell Broadbent.

Both ministers were committed to settling the refugees and asylum-seekers in countries other than Australia, but there was little detail into how this might be achieved.

Catholic Religious Australia said the most positive aspect of the day was the coming together of people of different faiths committed to working together for a humane, compassionate and decent refugee policy.