

Pacific Solution report released

A Just Australia and Oxfam Australia recently released a joint report into offshore processing called "a price too high: the cost of Australia's approach to asylum seekers." This report has been the result of months of research and writing by 4 overseas academics as well as two local researcher/writers, as well as many hours from both AJA and Oxfam staff.

The key finding of the report is that since 2001 it has cost the Australian taxpayer over \$1billion - more than \$500,000 per person to process fewer than 1,700 asylum seekers in Nauru, Manus and Christmas Island. By comparison, the latest estimate from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship suggests that the cost of holding asylum seekers in a mainland Australian detention centre is only 3.5% of the running costs of the Pacific Solution.

A Just Australia and Oxfam Australia have written to the Auditor General to request the ANAO initiate an Australian National Audit into the full financial cost of the Pacific Solution. Given the lack of scrutiny by Parliament of the Pacific Solution, and the evidence of possible permanent mental health impacts upon detained people we are also calling for a full public inquiry to examine the integrity of the offshore detention system. This inquiry must include an investigation into whether the Pacific Solution has had a causal effect in reducing boat arrivals. To date there has been no research conducted on the purported positive impacts claimed - that excision and offshore processing specifically reduces boat arrivals, thus reducing the number of people risking their lives in a boat journey to Australia.

We hope that the findings of our report and direct lobbying by AJA and Oxfam will prompt these two inquiries. We will keep you posted as to our progress.