

MEDIA RELEASE – Friday October 26 2018

## Remove Nauru children: Bishop O’Kelly

The Catholic Church in South Australia has added its voice to calls for Prime Minister Scott Morrison to bring to an end the suffering of children and families seeking asylum who are currently detained on Nauru.

Bishop Greg O’Kelly SJ, Apostolic Administrator of the Adelaide Archdiocese and Bishop of Port Pirie, said report after report revealed the “alarming deterioration in the mental and physical health of all detainees”.

“At a time when people are greatly concerned about the wellbeing, the care and safe upbringing of children, it seems conflicting that we have permitted innocent children to be confined to a place where ordinary and proper human development is challenged,” Bishop O’Kelly said.

His comments echo concerns raised by the Australian Churches Refugee Task Force, the Australian Medical Association, the Royal College of Physicians and many others after 11 children were brought to Australia for medical treatment earlier this week. There are believed to be 52 children still on the Pacific island.

Bishop O’Kelly said the removal by the Nauruan Government of Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) and other medical staff over the past month had exacerbated an already dire situation.

“We support any move to remove all children and all genuine refugees from Nauru and Manus Island,” he said.

**A national prayer vigil for the Nauru children and their families will be held next Friday night, November 2, at 6.30pm in St Mary MacKillop Plaza, adjacent to St Francis Xavier’s Cathedral.**



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