

NAURU DETENTION CENTRE



The detention centre on Nauru was opened in 2001 as part of the Pacific Solution. It was closed in 2007 but re-opened in 2012. As of 30 April 2014, there are 1,177 people in the Nauru detention centre which includes children, women and men.¹

Conditions in the Centre

Nauru lacks the infrastructure to ensure adequate processing and resettlement arrangements for asylum seekers. A former welfare worker in the Nauru detention centre has described the conditions as 'oppressive'.² The UNHCR undertook a monitoring visit to the detention centre in October 2013 in which they found the centre to be lacking a "durable solution for refugees" and expressed concern that no refugee arriving by boat would be settled in Australia.³ The UNHCR also found that:

'Australia's detention of asylum seekers on Nauru has been found not to provide a fair, efficient and expeditious system for assessing refugee claims, does not provide safe and humane conditions of treatment in detention, and does not provide adequate and timely solutions for refugees'.

The detention conditions are especially "harsh and unsuitable" for children, who do not have access to adequate education and recreational facilities. This is harmful to the mental and physical condition of asylum seeker children. The detrimental effects are not limited to children, with instances of hunger strikes, self-harm, aggression and suicide attempts.⁴

Financial Cost

At the beginning on 2013, it was estimated that the cost to set up Nauru over 4 years, would be \$1.9 billion.⁵ In addition, due to the riots that took place in the detention centre in July 2013, the cost to repair the facilities was placed at \$60 million.

The cost of setting up and running the Nauru detention centre could be limited simply by processing asylum seekers in Australia. In 2013, Martin Bowles, the Secretary of DIAC stated that processing asylum seekers in Australia costs 20% of the amount required to process someone offshore.⁶ This is a very conservative figure. It is estimated that each asylum seeker will cost \$1 million when infrastructure is taken into account.⁷

For more information see the ASRC's factsheets on the Manus Island detention centre and [offshore processing mythbuster](#).

¹ <http://newsroom.customs.gov.au/channels/media-releases/releases/operation-sovereign-borders-joint-agency-task-force-update-10>

² <http://www.smh.com.au/national/mark-isaacs-reveals-the-secrets-of-the-nauru-detention-centre-20140314-34rur.html>

³ <http://unhcr.org.au/unhcr/images/2013-11-26%20Report%20of%20UNHCR%20Visit%20to%20Nauru%20of%207-9%20October%202013.pdf>

⁴ <http://theconversation.com/one-step-forward-two-steps-back-for-asylum-seeker-mental-health-10943>

⁵ <http://rightnow.org.au/topics/asylum-seekers/the-economic-cost-of-our-asylum-seeker-policy/>

⁶ Hansard, Senate Estimates, 27-28 May 2013.

⁷ <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2013/04/29/3745276.htm>