

MEDIA RELEASE

Nauru and Manus Island will fail says Catholic Group

Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace met in Sydney this week under the title –*Refugees and Asylum Seekers: appealing to out better angels.*

Guest speaker John Menadue from the Centre for Policy Development said:

“We have traded away our treasured ethos of a fair go and a welcome to the stranger and allowed ourselves, one of the richest countries on earth, to be consumed by fear and uncertainty.”

He went on to say, “Nauru and Manus Island in the past failed as most of the people eventually were given refugee status and brought to Australia. The same will happen this time. And the UNHCR will not cooperate with this policy.”

The Houston Report gave the Malaysia proposal an amber light which, with more work, could be given a green light supported as it is by the UNHCR. Mr Menadue said that at the heart of this report is the fact that unilateral action to deal with asylum seekers and refugees on the part of Australia is limited. If there is to be any lasting impact it is through regional cooperation and dialogue and capacity building.

Lack of political leadership and political opportunism gave us a political impasse that had to be resolved to restore public confidence and avoid if possible more deaths at sea.

“Unfortunately,” said Mr Menadue, “the political impasse has been broken by giving us Nauru and Manus rather than Malaysia. They can never be part of a regional solution.”

Ends