**[Parish/Diocese/School/Group letterhead, including address]**

**[Date]**

Dear **[Prime Minister Scott Morrison/Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese/local MP]**,

We write in solidarity with the National Council of Churches, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia, the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce and other Jewish, Muslim and Christian faith leaders who have issued recent statements asking for an act of clemency and a humanitarian solution. These statements called on the Federal Government to resolve the plight of the people held in Australia’s immigration camps in Manus Island and Nauru, some of whom are now in Port Moresby or in Australia for medical reasons.

On behalf of the **[church congregation/school community/diocese/parish]**, I/we **[name/position]** support(s) this call for a ‘Jubilee’ for them – a Biblical principle whereby people who have long been trapped in bleak circumstances are given a special dispensation for a new beginning.

Evidence abounds that indefinite detention and ongoing uncertainty destroys people’s mental and physical health. Some of the people remaining in PNG and Nauru have been held there since July 2013. There is a loss of hope – of ever being able to rebuild their lives and be reunited with their families. Many have partners and children who are also living in unsafe situations, which compounds their anguish. This despair has led to an increase in acts of self-harm, as people have lost the strength to go on. Some people have been brought here for medical treatment, but continue to be held indefinitely in onshore immigration detention facilities or other places of detention. They are also unable to move on with their lives, and they live with the constant fear of being returned to Manus Island, Nauru or back to persecution in their countries of origin.

We affirm our commitment to seeing a fair system for all people seeking asylum in Australia, which includes community-based processing, fair process, access to a universal safety net and to permanent protection. We ask that this jubilee is the beginning of a renewed approach underpinned by compassion and welcome.

On matters regarding refugees, we take guidance from the following Scriptures:

“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt.”

(Leviticus 19: 33 – 34)

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives….”

(Luke 4: 18 – 19)

People who exercised their legal right to seek safety in Australia from life-threatening persecution, but were instead sent to Manus Island and Nauru, have been mistreated by Australia and have suffered far too much.

We urgently call on all Members of Parliament and Senators to take a non-partisan approach to end the humanitarian crisis which has been created by indefinite offshore detention. We urge Members and Senators to immediately provide a Jubilee and resettle, in Australia, New Zealand or to a safe, comparable country, all of the people who are part of the “offshore processing” cohort.

Yours faithfully,

**[Name]**

**[Position]**

**[Parish/Diocese/Organisation/Group/School]**