

Senate Inquiry: Offshore Processing

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Who is this guide for?

This guide has been prepared by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) for individuals, communities and organisations who are concerned with and interested in providing evidence to a Senate committee inquiry examining Australia's offshore processing and resettlement arrangements on Nauru and in Papua New Guinea.

We also have separate guides for [people who have been detained offshore](#) and people who have worked in offshore detention.

What is a Senate Inquiry?

A Senate inquiry is a formal parliamentary process used to investigate matters of public importance. It is conducted by a Senate committee, which is made up of Senators from different political parties.

A Senate inquiry typically involves:

- The committee inviting written submissions from individuals and organisations
- Public hearings where witnesses (which include those who made written submissions) can give evidence and answer questions - these can also be held 'in camera' to protect witnesses if required
- Senators reviewing evidence and producing a public report with findings and recommendations

Senate inquiries are an important Parliamentary mechanism for transparency and accountability. They enable the Senate to examine government decision-making, contracts, administration, and impacts on individuals and communities.

Senate Inquiry Process

The Senate decides the 'terms of reference' for the inquiry, which outlines the parameters of what the Senate would like the committee to investigate. Usually, the same process happens:

1. **The committee calls for submissions in writing.** Anyone can make a submission, and there are no rules about how they should be formatted. However, they are generally more effective if they are succinct (less than 10 pages, without repetition and well organised with subheadings). If accepted by the committee, most submissions are published on the committee's website with the name of the person or organisation making the submissions.

If the person makes a submission, they can ask the committee to withhold their name when publishing the document. Their submission will still be published but instead of the name it will say 'Name Withheld'.

It is also possible to ask for the submission to be kept private, that is, not published on the committee website. This should be requested when the document is submitted.

2. **The committee schedules hearings and calls witnesses.** People who made submissions, or others, are given invitations to appear at a hearing. These are usually held at Parliament House, but are sometimes held elsewhere, or witnesses may appear online. Most witnesses give evidence in public, but you can request to give your evidence 'in camera' (in a closed hearing) if you wish. Witnesses generally give a short introductory statement of a few minutes, and then Senators ask them questions.
3. **The committee writes a final report, and sometimes an interim report.** After reading the submissions and questioning witnesses, the committee produces a public report.

What is this Inquiry?

The Senate has voted to investigate offshore processing and resettlement arrangements, including the arrangements affecting the NZYQ cohort currently in Nauru.

The committee has called for **submissions by 13 February 2026**.

Public hearings will then be held, before the committee **delivers its report by 1 June 2026**. In some cases, the committee may extend deadlines. If you need additional time, it may be possible to request an extension.

The terms of reference for the inquiry are:

Offshore processing and resettlement arrangements, with particular reference to:

Australia's arrangements since 2022 with the Republic of Nauru, Papua New Guinea and other countries for offshore processing and resettlement programs, including:

- (i) the payments made by the Australian Government to the primary contractors and subcontractors involved in offshore processing and resettlement programs,*
 - (ii) the payments made by the Australian Government to other third parties involved in offshore processing and resettlement programs,*
 - (iii) the outcomes and effect of payments made to primary contractors and subcontractors involved in offshore processing and resettlement programs and other relevant third parties, and*
 - (iv) the integrity of arrangements made for the delivery of services and value money for Australian taxpayers; and*
- any other related matters.*

You can find more information [on the Parliament website here](#).

Why has this inquiry commenced now?

In recent months, there has been significant media reporting about alleged corruption, governance failures, and poor financial oversight in relation to offshore detention spending.

Former staff have raised concerns about:

- waste and mismanagement of public funds
- failures in procurement and contract oversight
- allegations that corruption has occurred at senior levels, including allegations involving Nauruan political leaders benefiting personally from contracts and related payments

This reporting has generated substantial public concern and political attention, which has contributed to the Senate initiating this inquiry.

Although the inquiry's primary focus is on contracts, payments, and integrity issues since 2022, the inclusion of "any other related matters" creates scope for broader evidence about how offshore processing operates in practice and the consequences of these arrangements over time.

In our view, some of the most important evidence for the committee to hear is about the operational realities that may not be captured in contract documents, budget statements, or official reporting. Often, committee members are only aware of publicly available information, so evidence from former staff is critical.

You can read some of the publicly available information about corruption concerns here:

[Nauru president accused in parliament of corruptly siphoning off millions of Australian funding](#)

[Labor accused in Senate of turning blind eye to Nauru corruption allegations](#)

Who can make a submission, and why is it important?

Making a submission is a powerful way to have your say and send a clear message to the Government that you oppose offshore processing.

The more individuals, communities and organisations that make submissions condemning this policy, the harder it will be for the Government to defend it. A large volume of submissions is often picked up by the media and noticed by politicians, and helps build public pressure. This inquiry is an opportunity to show the government just how many communities, organisations and voters are concerned with Australia's offshore processing and resettlement arrangements on Nauru and in Papua New Guinea.

Submissions from people, individuals and organisations who support people who have survived offshore processing are very important. These will provide first-hand information about the lasting impact of these cruel policies, along with the impacts on the Australian community and community organisations.

Submissions might lead to follow up opportunities to speak to politicians or the media and can be referenced in the Committee's final report or any dissenting reports. Additionally, if there is a public hearing into the Bill, the Committee can choose witnesses to provide information at the hearing from those who have made a submission to the inquiry, which creates a powerful way to shape the narrative in favour of compassion and decency on this issue.

What should I write in my submission?

There are no strict rules about what should be included in a Senate Inquiry submission, or the format. However, it is best to try to avoid repetition and to keep your submission succinct and factual, and to try to keep the submission to information you have first hand knowledge of.

Some examples of what you could include are:

- Be clear that you reject offshore processing and the cruelty it inflicts on people seeking asylum.
- Outline your observations of how offshore processing affected people detained there, with a focus on the impacts you have seen on people you support (without identifying them).
- If you have any knowledge of alleged corruption, improper conduct, exploitation, serious incidents or negligence within offshore processing or resettlement arrangements, outline them - make it clear what you know first-hand and what you have heard from others (for example, people you support).
- Information or concerns you have about how money is or was being spent in offshore detention.
- If you have members of your organisation or a group of people in your community who reject offshore processing, outline how many people you are representing and which electorate you live in.

What if I only have knowledge of the impact of offshore processing before 2022?

The Terms of Reference for the inquiry specifically state that it will have 'particular reference to: Australia's arrangements since 2022 with the Republic of Nauru, Papua New Guinea and other countries for offshore processing and resettlement programs'.

However, the above wording (particular reference) does not limit it to that time period. You can also include a statement in your submission explaining the following:

'I understand that the Committee will have particular reference to offshore processing and resettlement arrangements since 2022. However, it is not possible to fully understand these arrangements without considering the context of offshore processing over more than 13 years. The way this policy operated in the past has directly shaped how it operates today. I offer my observations to help the committee with this inquiry.'

The past operation of offshore processing has had a significant impact on the way it operates today, as patterns and norms are developed over time and create the conditions in which the risk of corruption has developed.

How do I send my submission?

You can email your submission to legcon.sen@aph.gov.au or [submit it online here](#).

You can also call the Committee on 02 6277 3560 if you have any questions about making a submission.

How can I get help to write a submission?

If you need help to write your submission or you have questions, contact Natasha Blucher from ASRC:

Email: natasha.b2@asrc.org.au

Call / text: 0412 034 821

If you need more time to make a submission, you can also request an extension. ASRC can help you to advocate for an extension to be granted.

SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

Submission of [First Name] [Last Name]

Inquiry into offshore processing and resettlement arrangements

My name is [First Name] [Last Name] of [Suburb], [State] and [I/on behalf of Organisation Name] am writing to the committee because I have received information about the [Nauru / Papua New Guinea] Regional Processing Centre in the course of my duties. *[In a short sentence, describe your role in the community/organisation and how you have developed observations or obtained access to this information.]*

I am grateful to the committee for accepting my submission, in which I will outline my concerns with Australia's offshore processing and resettlement arrangements on Nauru and in Papua New Guinea. Specifically, my submissions discuss [provide brief summary, for example: "the alleged corruption, governance failures, and poor financial oversight in relation to offshore detention spending and my concerns of how offshore processing negatively affect people detained there."]

[If before 2022, insert the following paragraph:]

I understand that the Committee will have particular reference to offshore processing and resettlement arrangements since 2022. However, it is not possible to fully understand these arrangements without considering the harm caused by offshore processing over more than 13 years. The way this policy operated in the past has directly shaped how it operates today. I offer my first hand experience to help the committee with this inquiry.]

You can then write your observations or experiences here, in dot points or in paragraphs. If you can, include sub-headings to organise the information. You can use any relevant headings depending on your content, but below are some examples:

Incidents and integrity concerns

Barriers to reporting

Concerns about value for money

Treatment of people detained

Please also consider including information under "What should I write in my submission?" on page 4.

Thank you for considering my submission. I am available to provide evidence at the convenience of the committee.