



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Minister for Immigration and Border Protection

The Hon. Rimbink Pato
Papua New Guinean Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

**JOINT STATEMENT -
AUSTRALIA AND PNG INAUGURAL JOINT MINISTERIAL FORUM TO
OVERSEE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL RESETTLEMENT
ARRANGEMENT**

Thursday 3 April 2014

- The first monthly Joint Ministerial Forum to oversee implementation of the Regional Resettlement Arrangement (RRA) was held in Port Moresby on 2 April between Papua New Guinean Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration, the Hon Rimbink Pato, and Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, the Hon Scott Morrison MP.
- The outcomes of the meeting were as follows:
 - Ministers welcomed the decision by the PNG Cabinet that allows the first tranche of initial assessments to be delivered to transferees within a month.
 - The process of Refugee Status Determination is well advanced, with two-thirds of transferees having had initial interviews at the Regional Processing Centre.
 - The development of a review process for those initially assessed not to be refugees was underway and due for completion in April.
 - A refugee visa has been approved by the Government of PNG for those determined to be refugees. The visa will provide for work rights and freedom of movement.
 - Ministers noted that the PNG Expert Panel on Settlement convened on 1 April with a scheduled report back to the PNG Government at the end of April on recommendations on implementing refugee resettlement.

- Australia reaffirmed its commitment under the RRA to meet costs relating to the settlement of refugees in PNG and would await the recommendations of the Settlement Expert Panel, which will influence the level of assistance required. It was anticipated the first refugees could be resettled in June 2014.
- Ministers reiterated that all persons transferred to PNG under the RRA who are found to be refugees will be resettled in PNG. No-one will be resettled in Australia.
- Those persons found not to be refugees will be held in detention in PNG pending removal to their home country or another country where they have a right of entry – no-one found not to be a refugee will be transferred to Australia.
- Improvements to infrastructure facilities at the Manus Regional Processing Centres for asylum seekers continue at pace.
- The transition of garrison and support services to Transfield Services Ltd from G4S is now complete and Ministers noted the transition process had proceeded smoothly.
- Ministers affirmed the urgency and need to complete the comprehensive investigations underway into the events that took place at Manus Island of 16-18 February.
 - Australian Government committed to continue to provide all assistance necessary, if requested by PNG authorities to finalise their official police investigation into the incident, including providing legal assistance for witnesses to alleged criminal acts.
 - Ministers also agreed to facilitate interviews of persons of interest who are no longer in PNG.
 - Ministers agreed that all relevant information from the independent administrative reviews would be handed over to the police investigation to enable swift prosecutions.
 - The outcomes of the investigations will inform a coronial inquiry in PNG.
 - Both Governments will expedite the implementation of recommendations arising from the investigations.
- Ministers received an update on the good progress of implementation of the Joint Understanding and additional assistance package for Manus.
- Ministers noted positive progress to deliver projects in Manus Province with the additional \$26m in Australian development assistance, including:
 - improvements to infrastructure and equipment at Lorengau Hospital

- infrastructure school kits for Manus schools
 - road and bridge maintenance rehabilitation works
 - renovation of the Lorengau Market roof and
 - community grants for youth activities.
- Ministers also noted the ongoing successful implementation of the \$420m broader Australian development assistance package under the Joint Understanding on Further Bilateral Cooperation on Health, Education and Law and Order, including:
 - Angau Memorial Hospital – redevelopment on a 50/50 basis with Government of PNG;
 - Lower Courts Complex – design of a magistrates complex in Port Moresby;
 - Madang to Lae Road – design of the road;
 - University of PNG – infrastructure and twinning support.
- Ministers noted the recent successful visit to Papua New Guinea by Prime Minister Abbott, the longest visit by an Australian Prime Minister for twenty five years, during which Mr Abbott announced Australia’s commitment to support Papua New Guinea’s preparations to host the APEC Summit in 2018, and Australia’s willingness to increase the Australian police presence in Papua New Guinea.
 - Ministers also noted the ongoing strong commitment of both Governments to strengthen the higher education sector in Papua New Guinea.
- The next scheduled meeting is on 9 May 2014.

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