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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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St Francis Social Services (SFSS) and the House of Welcome would like to express their disappointment and concern regarding the government's decision to repeal the Medevac Bill.

The lack of adequate, local healthcare facilities on Nauru and PNG means treatment for people with critical health conditions is inaccessible.

Denying medical professionals the ability to determine the best interest of the patient, and putting this decision back in the hands of bureaucrats will put those with vulnerabilities at further risk.

The news of this decision will only add to the physiological, emotional and mental health distress of those who have languished for so long in Australia's inhumane offshore detention centres.

Twelve lives were lost in offshore detention, prior to the introduction of the Medevac bill. Since its introduction in March 2019, there have been no loss of lives, highlighting the impact of this life-saving bill.

At the House of Welcome, we provide daily assistance to people seeking asylum and witness the physical and psychological health impacts on those who have come from Nauru and PNG. Maurizio Vespa, CEO of SFSS says "we hold grave concerns for those who remain and will not have access to medical assistance in Australia."

This Medevac Bill was an opportunity for our government to show compassion, mercy, and concern for another human being. Mr Vespa stated "St Francis Social Services and the House of Welcome are disappointed that the Parliament has abandoned its humanitarian principles, and are concerned of the potential consequences of repealing this bill."

Maurizio Vespa

CEO

St Francis Social Services