

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
Monday 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2019



461 – 463 Oxford St  
PO Box 39  
Paddington NSW 2021  
PH: 02 9331 2691  
ABN: 67 064 978 347

**‘Medevac Bill repeal takes away basic human rights access to urgent medical care for seekers of asylum’.**

St Francis Social Services and The House of Welcome are strong advocates for the seekers of asylum and refugees coming to Australia.

Our services are constantly stretched, as we offer our daily support to people who are seeking a haven in our country. With changes to SRSS and now the uncertainty of the Medevac Bill, seekers of asylum and refugees are struggling to understand why they are having to experience poor treatment.

For many years, children, women, and men have endured limited access to critical medical health services, while in offshore detentions. The introduction of the Medevac Bill in February 2019, has saved numerous lives and provided people detained offshore with urgent life-saving medical treatment.

*“ The passing of the Home Affairs Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous Measures) Act 2019 (‘Medevac Law’) has resulted in over 110 people suffering from physical and mental health conditions accessing urgent medical care in Australia” ASRC Aug 2019.*

Before the introduction to the Medevac Bill, seekers of asylum on average were waiting up to two years for medical transfers to the mainland to treat their illnesses. There are still seekers of asylum suffering from a variety of illnesses and mental health issues, and the Medevac Bill ensures that these people get access to the medical care they need.

St Francis Social Services believes that people seeking asylum in Australia should be treated with compassion and given every possible opportunity to access medical services. We must add our voice and concern to ensure that the Medevac Bill is not repealed.

St Francis Social Services and the House of Welcome endorses the continuation of the Medevac Bill so that medical professionals may continue to care for people who are so desperately in need. We stand in solidarity with others who are in support of people who are marginalized in our community.

*“Truly, I tell you, whatever, you do for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”. Matthew 25: 40, 45.*

***Please, contact your local Federal Member to voice your support of Medevac and the continuation of urgent medical care for refugees and seekers of asylum.***

Maurizio Vespa  
CEO | St Francis Social Services