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NSW Young Lawyers calls for medical and humanitarian evacuations from Manus Island

Recent cuts to essential services at the Manus Regional Processing Centre, including access to food, water and medical treatment, has led to an unfolding humanitarian emergency affecting more than 600 refugees and asylum seekers.

NSW Young Lawyers President David Turner said the Australian Government should act upon calls by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to immediately provide the men with protection, food, water, health and other essential services.

“NSW Young Lawyers is seriously concerned by reports by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees¹ that replacement accommodation at West Lorengau lacks electrical or water and appropriate security,” Mr Turner said.

“There are also reports of inadequate access to hospital facilities and torture and trauma counselling.”

Mr Turner said reports that adequate emergency medical care was not available on Manus Island were deeply concerning.

“If emergency medical care is not available on Manus Island, those who require it need to be evacuated to a properly equipped hospital as soon as possible,” he said.

Mr Turner said that in order to fulfil its domestic and international legal obligations, Australia should provide a durable solution for refugees and people seeking asylum on Manus Island, and Nauru, including by supporting the movement of refugees to safe countries that are willing to accept them, such as the United States of America and New Zealand.

About NSW Young Lawyers:

- NSW Young Lawyers is the largest body of young and newly practising lawyers, and law students, in Australia, with 16 Committees each dedicated to a particular area of law.
- Active, innovative and dynamic, we support practitioners in the early stages of their career development, giving them the opportunity to extend their network, expand their knowledge, advance their career and contribute to the profession and community.
- Membership is free for all young legal practitioners (including barristers) in New South Wales under 36 years and/or in their first five years of practice, and law students

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¹ 'UNHCR Urges Australia to Stop Unfolding Humanitarian Emergency' (2 November 2017) <http://www.unhcr.org/en-au/news/press/2017/11/59e6b5c77/unhcr-urges-australia-to-stop-unfolding-humanitarian-emergency.html>