




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

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ADJOURNMENT

Kangaroo Point, Detainees

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (6.05 pm): I rise to speak about an issue that is impacting on the people in my electorate right now and one which offers insight into the morality of some of our most senior leaders and decision-makers in this country. As we speak, around 65 refugees are being held in a makeshift detention centre in Kangaroo Point. These people, mostly men, are being held for various reasons. Some of these people are asylum seekers, including people from Manus Island and Nauru, brought to Australia for medical treatment. Some are refugees and some are yet to have their status determined. Some have been held for up to eight years.

This story is harrowing and many people in my electorate have raised their disgust with the federal government's inhumane decision to not settle them into community. One of these is Peter Edwards, a 12-year-old student in my electorate who was so disturbed by the stories of these men that he organised a petition at his school, Kelvin Grove Secondary College. Peter and his mum, Camille, and his dad, Ian, join us today in the gallery. I would like to thank them for their activism and for working with me on this issue.

Peter's petition quickly gained the support of 323 of his peers; however, the federal government unfortunately refused to accept the petition as it was not laid out according to their standards. I would like to put on record the voices of Peter and his peers. I table this nonconforming petition and speech notes that Peter has provided me which he developed in conjunction with some of the men held in this makeshift detention centre and their advocates.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding detention of persons in Kangaroo Point Motel [202](#).

I want to again acknowledge Peter and the young people in the electorate of Cooper who do outstanding work standing up for our vulnerable people. I would like to read from Peter's petition and speech notes directly. It states—

We are opposed to how these men are being treated and we demand their release. Their human rights are being ignored and made worse with the COVID situation. They are not allowed to leave the motel, they cannot have visits from relatives, they cannot isolate, and they have limited access to masks and hand sanitiser.

These people have not committed a crime by seeking refuge and are being wrongfully detained.

Many of them have not even received the medical treatment they were brought over to receive. And many are dealing with PTSD from the experiences they faced in their home countries.

The Morrison government has kept people in indefinite detention for up to eight years and has not explained its plans for these people. Nor has it explained whether it has considered community detention for people who do not pose a risk to the public. During this challenging time, I believe it is imperative for us to look after all people in our community, including those who have sought Australia's protection.

When these men in Kangaroo Point are released, it will be because of the relentless efforts of people like Peter Edwards who have continued to turn up and bear witness to what is going on for these men just five kilometres from where we sit tonight.