By ignoring the plight of children in refugee camps, we are putting a questionable long-term deterrence policy before the suffering of faultless human beings. Whether the concept of “*deterrence*” is legitimate or not, it does not justify ignoring the impact on the mental health of this vulnerable population. Evidence of post-traumatic symptoms in children following the witnessing of riots, violence and suicidal behaviours is extremely troubling, and we as a society are directly responsible for these outcomes.

Considering that we are a resource-rich and economically prosperous nation, how is it that we refuse to help those who flee conflict and oppression? We spent almost $2 billion to construct detention facilities in Nauru, and we spent over $1.5 billion in *one* financial year in 2013 to operate the system. Why not redirect this money to resettlement packages and social services, what do we have to lose? “*Queue hopping*” rhetoric is irrelevant, if you are stuck in a burning building, you will seek any measure to escape that fire, and it is not our place to judge. Furthermore, we assume that that all refugees will be economic burdens, which ignores the fact that they will contribute to society economically after resettlement, which poses the opportunity for placement in rural areas or regions that require stimulation.

The immorality alone, of actively detaining and effectively punishing children who have done no wrong, is inhumane and deplorable. As Australians, we have a human rights record to be proud of, with one of the highest annual refugee intakes. The current asylum seeker detention centre policies are a blight on this record, and we need to rectify this as a democratic nation.

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