



Factsheet

OFFSHORE PROCESSING: AN OVERVIEW

Last updated: August 2021

to the Pacific island nation of Nauru and to Manus Island in Papua New Guinea.

What is 'offshore processing'?

Since 13 August 2012, asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat without valid visas have been processed either in the Republic of Nauru (Nauru) or on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Offshore processing involves asylum seekers being detained and undergoing health, security and identity checks in Australia, before being forcibly transferred to Nauru or PNG at the earliest possible opportunity and undergoing refugee status determination (RSD) in those countries.

All asylum seekers who have arrived by boat since August 2012 have been liable to removal to Nauru or PNG, even if they applied for asylum immediately upon arrival in Australia or had characteristics warranting special consideration (such as being an unaccompanied minor, a survivor of torture and trauma, or a victim of trafficking; or having special health needs requiring treatment in Australia, or immediate family already living in Australia). However, while all asylum seekers have been liable to be sent offshore, in practice some remained in Australia due to a lack of space in the offshore facilities or for other reasons. At various times asylum seekers have also been brought back from Nauru or PNG and permitted to remain in Australia, either temporarily or on an ongoing basis.

Despite arrangements for offshore processing remaining in place, no new asylum seekers have been transferred to Nauru or PNG since 2014.

