

## WATCHED 'MARY MEETS MOHAMMAD'? – Now wondering what you can do?

*The following are some active ideas –*

- Join prominent barrister and asylum seeker advocate Julian Burnside QC in his letter writing campaign to asylum seekers held on Nauru and Manus Island. (see attached information)

*Prominent barrister and asylum seeker advocate Julian Burnside QC has begun a letter writing campaign to asylum seekers held on Nauru and Manus Island.*

*Burnside is using the social media outlet Twitter to call on Australians to write to more than 400 asylum seekers he knows of in Australia's offshore detention centres.*

*Burnside says the campaign is the nearest thing to human contact for "people we have sent away and are mistreating".*

*"A similar letter-writing campaign in the early 2000s was very valuable in helping keep up the spirits of asylum seekers. This time we have people in offshore detention," Burnside told Pro Bono Australia News.*

*"One of the motivations is to show people being held on Manus Island and Nauru that not every Australian hates them. It's like reaching out a hand to them."*

*-Burnside said the experience from the earlier letter writing campaign was that when asylum seekers wrote back the effect was life changing for many Australians.*

*The asylum seeker advocate says for practical reasons and for the sake of privacy he is asking contributors to send the letters to him and he will distribute them to his list of some 400 offshore asylum seekers.*

*"I have a list of the people in the camps and I will be distributing the letters along with more paper and the self-addressed envelopes from the Australian letter writers. I will provide a covering letter and I will also be asking the detainees to provide the names of others in the camps with them," he said.*

*"The original campaign saw thousands of letters from concerned Australians and back then there was nothing like Twitter to promote it."*

*Julian Burnside was awarded the [Human Rights Law Award](#), sponsored by the Law Council of Australia in 2004.*

*The Award recognised Burnside's on-going contribution towards protecting the human rights of individuals and groups.*

*Burnside has been [previously quoted](#) as saying that after 40 years of commercial practice, it was his pro bono work for asylum seekers that finally gave him a sense of "doing something useful".*

### How to send a letter:

Write a letter, but not directed to a specific person. Say who you are, so the recipient will not wonder whether you are acting for the government. Tell them something about yourself. Let them know that not all Australians are hostile to them. Be sensitive to their circumstances. Encourage them to write back to you.

Send the letter to: Julian Burnside, 205 William St, Melbourne, 3000

Enclose a self-addressed envelope

I will post your letter (with your self-addressed envelope) to a specific asylum seeker on Manus or Nauru. I will explain the letter-writing program and I will include some writing paper and your self-addressed envelope so they are able to reply.

When you get a reply, just keep writing to that person. If you want, you can ask them for the names of other people you can write to.

It is simple. If you decide to take part in the letter writing campaign, you might like to share the responses you get, and encourage your friends to write to asylum seekers.

Follow Julian Burnside on Twitter: [@JulianBurnside](#)



- Contact the local Refugee Support Group: Contact - Latrobe Valley refugee support group. David and Rosemary Langmore. Phone: 03 51 745327 Email: [davidandrol@westnet.com.au](mailto:davidandrol@westnet.com.au)
- Write to your local member – Daren Chester – expressing that you are unhappy about how refugees are being treated by Australia
- Write to the media – expressing your concern over how they report on events surrounding refugees
- Check out the Amnesty International Website for more ideas: [www.amnesty.org.au](http://www.amnesty.org.au)
- Join the local Amnesty International Group: Contact - Di Collins 0428 987 005