



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

7 August 2013

Press Release

Third group sent to PNG under regional settlement arrangement

The Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship today confirmed the successful transfer to Papua New Guinea of a third group of 39 asylum seekers subject to new regional settlement arrangement.

Under the new arrangement signed with PNG on July 19, unauthorised arrivals will be sent to PNG for assessment and if found to be refugees, will be settled there.

“People found not to be refugees may be returned to their home country or a country where they had a right of residence, or held in a transit facility,” a DIAC spokesman said.

The charter flight, with the group of 39 single adult men – consisting of 34 Iranians, four Pakistanis and an Afghan – escorted by the Australian Federal Police, DIAC staff, interpreters and medical staff, departed Christmas Island about 1am today.

The group landed in Manus Province at about 7.30am where they will be accommodated while their asylum claims are processed by the PNG Government.

There is no cap on the number of people who can be transferred to PNG and transfers will continue on a regular basis. Women, children and unaccompanied minors will be transferred in due course as appropriate arrangements are made.

Australia will work with PNG to expand the Manus Island regional processing centre, as well as explore the construction of other regional processing centres in PNG.

“If people are paying thousands and thousands of dollars to a people smuggler, they are buying a ticket to a country other than Australia,” the spokesman said.

Media Enquiries: Mr Faizan Haq: 051 835 5422, 0300 854 7816
National Communications Centre in Australia (English only): +61 2 6264 2244
Visit our Media Centre at: www.newsroom.immi.gov.au