

TEACHERS DEMAND AN END TO ALL THE SECRECY PROVISIONS OF THE BORDER FORCE ACT

Teachers for Refugees today welcomed the government's amendments of 30 September to the Border Force Act which exempt "Health Professionals" from its notorious "secrecy provisions".

However, we are incensed that teachers and other professionals like social workers, who speak out about conditions in immigration detention, are still liable to large fines and up to two years imprisonment.

Mark Goudkamp from Teachers for Refugees said, "The government has finally exempted doctors, nurses and psychologists from its draconian legislation. But only because of immense political pressure from doctors and other health workers."

"It is outrageous that teachers and social workers, who often know the realities of refugees' lives on detention, are still muzzled. If the government had nothing to hide, it would not need the Border Force Act, and it would allow journalists to freely report about Nauru."

"Teachers for Refugees will be there in numbers to support the Sydney doctors' march on Saturday 5 November, which will demand the closure of Manus and Nauru, and the bringing of all refugees and asylum seekers there to Australia," he said.

Judith Reen, former secondary teacher on Nauru and Manus Island, who spoke out on Four Corners on Monday night, added:

"A gagging order also violates the duty of care we practice as professionals. It prevents us from ensuring that any physical or psychological harm that comes to the vulnerable populations we work with is dealt with appropriately. Such secrecy, therefore, undermines the core of what we do."

For more info, contact Mark Goudkamp 0422078376 or Judith Reen 0406773157

DOCTORS MARCH FOR REFUGEES , SAT 5 Nov, 1pm, Hyde Park Fountain.