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DEAL WITH CAMBODIA WILL PROVE AN EXPENSIVE EMBARRASSMENT

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is dismayed that the Government continues to pay poor countries to solve its political problems rather than engage in a truly regional approach to solving the humanitarian issue of refugees and asylum seekers. The Manus Island debacle is likely to be repeated in Cambodia because another rushed bandaid solution is being progressed to address a serious systemic problem.

The number of refugees and asylum seekers is increasing exponentially due to war and repressive Governments and this global problem is not likely to reduce in the near future. While people have little hope that their claims for refugee status will be done promptly, people will continue to use irregular migration routes.

Professor Karen Healy, President of the AASW, said that “Current policies with regard to asylum seekers are obscenely expensive, inhuman and make Australia look foolish in the region.”

“Australia as a priority needs to

1. Lift the number of refugees that it accepts and
2. Work with the other countries to find a truly regional solution to irregular migration routes.”

The AASW represents 7500 professional social workers, many of whom work directly with refugees and asylum seekers.

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