

CAPSA

CATHOLIC ALLIANCE FOR PEOPLE
SEEKING ASYLUM



Catholic Alliance For People Seeking Asylum

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Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum



- In 2014, the **Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum** was formed to turn hearts and minds to compassion. We dream of an Australia that welcomes and respects people seeking asylum.
- We are working to achieve this by building on the groundswell of support from Australian Catholics, linking people together and creating a collective Catholic voice for change.
- Together, we will advocate for policy changes to better uphold the dignity and rights of each person seeking asylum.
- Jesuit Social Services and Cabrini Health were joint founders of the Alliance, which is supported by an Advisory Group comprising peak Catholic bodies across the nation.
- Jesuit Social Services has led the project for the past 4 years

Catholic Social Teaching

- The core of Catholic Social Teaching and any ethical concern about the treatment of people seeking asylum is the conviction that each person is precious and unique, that they may not be used as means to other ends, and that their human dignity must be respected. This means that they must not be denied conditions necessary for their flourishing.
- CAPSA engages in both grassroots organising and strategic advocacy to work to ensure Australia processes the claims of people seeking asylum promptly and fairly, with respect to their human dignity.

Community Organising as a Tool for Change

- Organising aims to **shift relationships of power**.
- Organising does not focus energy on educating a key decision-maker of the merits of a policy, it aims to make adopting a particular position in their political interests.

Source: Plan to Win

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NATIONAL WEEK OF PRAYER & ACTION (2016 and 2017)



What do we do?



CAPSA has reached out to Catholic schools across the country to encourage them to participate in a refugee solidarity event during our National Week of Prayer and Action

We provided resources, media support and an online platform for schools to access.

How do we do it?



The CAPSA team (staff and volunteers):

- Made 2,500 phone calls
- Sent 15,000 emails
- Created 50 individual resources
- Visited 25 schools

We believe in the idea that direct communication is the single most effective way of asking someone to do something.

How did schools take action and pray for
people seeking asylum?



St Bernard's & St
Columba's College,
Melbourne

Circles of Silence

Started by the Franciscans, a 30-minute silence to recognise the injustice faced by refugees and migrants



Galen College,
Wangaratta

The Cage

Students spend time in temporary confinement to stand against immigration detention centres.



St Joseph's,
Clonard, Sacred
Hear and St Ignatius
Colleges, Geelong

Meetings with MPs

Some students met with their local MPs to ask that the government and opposition treat refugees more compassionately



Our Lady of Mercy
College, Melbourne

Speaking Events and Forums

Schools invite special guests to share experiences, thoughts and prayers about the current policy towards refugees in Australia.



Seymour
College,
SA



Our Lady of
Nativity, Melbourne

Whole School Photos

Students and staff gather to send an important message on a large scale.

What did we achieve? (2017)

76 Catholic schools nationally participated across every state and territory

This represents over 8,000 students taking action

We reached into school communities - estimated reach of 150,000 people

In sharing this via social media, we reached:

- 27,000 people on Twitter
- More than 50,000 on Facebook



National Day of
Prayer & Action
Launch, Melbourne

What's next?

We continue to organise and empower Catholic communities to take action and coordinate support for those seeking asylum.

We hope it will inspire schools, and others, to take action themselves.

Check out our website and social media for more details:

- Web: capsa.org.au
- FB: @JoinCAPSA
- TW: @CAPSA_Ican