

Media Release – Palm Sunday 14 April 2019

Palm Sunday Rallies called for Peace, Justice for Refugees and A Fair Go for All

Huge crowds rally across the nation.

Australians gathered in capital cities, with tens of thousands in Melbourne (10k), Sydney (3k), and Canberra (4k), plus hundreds in other capitals and regional centres.

Over 200 organisations endorsed the Palm Sunday “Walk for Justice for Refugees” rallies, and many well-known Australians, included Craig Foster, Nyadol Nyuen, Tom Ballard*, Corinne Grant, David Manne, and Richard Flanagan added their voices to the call for decency, compassion and fairness.

Many participants gathered for church services before joining the rallies. Faith Leaders were all represented, Jewish, Hindu, Anglican, Catholic, Islamic, Buddhist, Quaker, and more.

The Christchurch massacre was remembered with sorrow, and demands for an end to the hate speech and racism that fosters division and Islamophobia.

Many candidates for the coming Federal Election took time out from campaigning to show their support for refugees.

But the politicians were outnumbered by blue medical scrubs and white coats from the Nurses and Midwives Association and the Australian Medical Student Association. School and College banners stood proudly alongside Union and Church banners.

And Multicultural Australia was on display. The faces in our parliament may not be representative of modern Australia, but the Palm Sunday crowds certainly are.

In Sydney,

Soccer legend Craig Foster said, “I’m here to speak about our treatment of asylum seekers, about Australia recovering its humanity and compassion and depoliticising the plight of vulnerable people.”

For information about the Sydney Rally contact Ian Rintoul of Refugee Action Coalition Sydney, rintoulian10@gmail.com<mailto:rintoulian10@gmail.com>, 0417275713.

In Melbourne:

Behrouz Boochani, Iranian journalist who recently won the Victorian Premier’s Award for Literature, spoke to the rally from Manus Island. “The Australian government has detained 1000 innocent people as hostages for almost six years.”

Boochani also spoke about the tragedy in Christchurch. “All of us in Manus & Nauru and New Zealand and Australia have been in shock and mourning because of the terrorist attack in New Zealand... I ask the Australian people to condemn this kind of violence and the politicians and media who have contributed to this violence with their words.”

“I believe that we must continue to stand up against this cruel government in any way we can.”

Video broadcast by Behrouz for Palm Sunday today:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RUfHSPqG-m4_Bx_oXjBORhRnkWOq3XY_/view

"This is an important day for the Australian people – the kind of violence that we saw in Christchurch in New Zealand has been happening in Manus and Nauru for years. This is the reality. There is a connection between what is happening in Manus and Nauru and what is happening in Australian politics; the Australian people must not be silent in the face of what the government is doing in Manus and Nauru."

Richard Flanagan, acclaimed author, friend of Behrooz and vocal critic of the current policies added "Every day that the asylum seekers of Nauru and Manus Island endure punishment without end, guilty without crime, we too become a little less free."

Nyadol Nyuon, lawyer, Sundanese refugee and activist said "I stand here today as an example of what the generosity of a nation can afford someone who was once considered stateless. Refugees and asylum seekers are just like you and I - people looking for hope and the opportunity to build new lives."

For further comment about the Melbourne rally, call Sr Brigid Arthur 0408 101 134 or Chris Breen 0403 013 183.

Email info@refugeeadvocacynetwork.org.au<mailto:info@refugeeadvocacynetwork.org.au> or call Marie Hapke on 0409 252 673.

In Canberra over 4000 have gathered.

In Regional Australia:

Waterside walks featured from Cairns to Lennox Head.

In Alice Springs, artists engaged the community in creating a flotilla of wooden boats in the main street.

In Bendigo Community members and Church goers joined with local human rights groups to celebrate the success stories of refugees in Bendigo: stories of safety, of welcome and integration, of refugees who have brought cultural and economic benefits.

In Newcastle musician Farhad Bandesh spoke from Manus.

For information about rallies in regional and rural centres, contact Marie Sellstrom of Rural Australians for Refugees, rar.australia@gmail.com<mailto:rar.australia@gmail.com> 0417 398 528 or Jan Govett of the Australian Refugee Action Network 0417 313 037

Palm Sunday Rallies held on Sunday, 14 April 2019

1. Adelaide: 2pm. I CHOOSE HUMANE.
Victoria Square, Adelaide
2. Alice Springs: 9am, Safe Harbour Community Art Launch
John Flynn Uniting Church, Safe Harbour art launch
3. Armidale: 11am. Walk for Justice for Refugees.
11am Meet at Central Park.
11.30am Walk to Armidale Mall.
Return to Central Park for Speakers

4. Lennox Head: 11am. Ballina Region for Refugees Palm Sunday Rally
Foreshore at Lennox Head near the bus stop and across the road from the shops at The
guest speaker is Dr Gabrielle Rose from the Refugee Medical Evacuation Support Group.
5. Bendigo: 12 Noon Justice for Refugees Vigil
Meeting at 12 noon at
St Andrew's UCA, St Paul's Cathedral, Sacred Heart Cathedral, St Killian's,
or at the Poppet Head in Rosalind Park,
and walking to the Bendigo Library Gardens.
6. Brisbane: 2-4pm. Palm Sunday Rally for Peace and Refugees
Speakers Corner, outside Parliament House, Corner of George and Alice Streets, Brisbane.
7. Cairns: 10am. Walk For Justice For Refugees – People Just Like us
Cairns Western Events Lawn
Cairns Esplanade
8. Canberra: 1pm. Enough is Enough: Palm Sunday 2019 Rally for Refugees
Garema Place, Canberra
9. Forster: 11am. Justice for Refugees rally
Forster Main Baths then a walk via footpaths across the bridge to Tuncurry to the park for a
30 minute where a silent vigil will take place.
<http://www.greatlakesrar.org/contact-us/>
10. Hobart: 2-4pm. Refugee Rights on Palm Sunday
Parliament Lawns, Hobart
11. Launceston: 12.30pm-2.30pm. Walk for Refugee Justice
BYO picnic in Princes Square from 12.30pm.
The Walk starts at 2pm sharp, making its way from Princes Square via the Brisbane St Mall
to City Park.
A simple celebration will take place in City Park from approx. 2.30pm.
Wet weather arrangements: 2pm in Milton Hall, 13 Frederick Street, over the road from
Princes Square.
12. Melbourne: 2-5pm. Walk for Justice for Refugees
State Library of Victoria
info@refugeeadvocacynetwork.org.au<mailto:info@refugeeadvocacynetwork.org.au>
13. Newcastle: 12-2pm. Newcastle Says Yes To Refugees Palm Sunday
Foreshore Park near Tramshed.
14. Perth: 1-3pm. Palm Sunday Walk for Justice for Refugees 2019
St George's Cathedral
15. Sydney: 2-4pm. Say Yes to Refugees
Belmore Park, 191 Hay St, Haymarket, NSW.
16. Townsville: 4-6pm. Palm Sunday Walk for Justice for Refugees
The Strand, Townsville
Meet at the Rockpool and walk to the Gregory St Amphitheatre

17. Whyalla: 2:30-3:30pm. Compassion and Justice for Refugees
Corner of Hincks Avenue and Nicolson Avenue, Whyalla

18. Wollongong: 12.30pm – 2.30pm.
Wollongong Palm Sunday rally for refugees!
Wollongong Town Hall

19. Yass: 2pm. Stand with Us on Palm Sunday
Riverbank Park, (at the Gazebo, near the poplars), Yass, NSW

A contact list for Palm Sunday 2019 events around the nation is attached and links can be found at:

<https://australianrefugeeactionnetwork.wordpress.com/palm-sunday>

Pics at:

#PalmSunday #PalmSunday2019 #Justice4Refugees
#Manus #Nauru #RefugeesWelcome

Jane Salmon
NSW Australia
0417919354