

Australian Refugee Action Network Committee

Terms of Reference –September 2019

Context

The campaign for refugee rights has been a long fight. There have been many twists and turns in the campaign which have required those in the movement to respond quickly. Without an organising body, the capacity to provide a coordinated national response to issues has been severely limited. The Australian Refugee Action Network (ARAN) promotes and networking and exchange between grassroots advocacy and activists groups, and encouraging co-ordinated national actions and lobbying on particular issues.

Purpose

The purpose of the Australian Refugee Action Network (ARAN) National Committee is to:

- Provide an avenue for organised communication and collaboration between grassroots refugee advocacy and activist groups across the nation
- Suggest forms of, and themes for, actions, including national days of action
- Receive proposals from member organisations to initiate actions on a national basis
- Issue draft press releases for discretionary use by member groups and others
- Resource members groups by sharing graphic design, videos, fact sheets etc.
- Maximize social media reach by the sharing of local actions and events around the nation

Scope and Authority

The ARAN National Committee has the authority to make decisions regarding the operations of the Australian Refugee Action Network which are within the purpose and scope outlined above.

The Committee has no power or authority to make decisions for, or give direction to, individual member organisations. Each member organisation maintains autonomy and carries out its own operations as it sees fit.

The ARAN National Committee is expected to:

- Based on information and priorities identified by member groups, make suggestions about campaigns (e.g. timing, forms and themes for nation action)
- Receive proposals from individual member organisations to initiate actions on a national basis
- Issue proforma press releases for use by member groups in relation to national actions or issues
- Based in information provided by member groups, develop a resource list of spokespeople and high profile supporters
- Share information and resources with member organisations
- Provide an Update to member organisations, generally on a monthly basis.

Membership

The ARAN National Committee:

- Will be elected by delegates from ARAN member groups (no more than two delegates per organisation)
- Will be elected at an annual national conference/or general meeting which is (ideally) held in a different city each year.
- Will be elected according to a simple first-past-the-post system (i.e. a ranking of the number of votes for each candidate)
- Will consist of no fewer than six and no more than ten members
- Will not include more than one member from any organisation
- Will appoint its own convenor and secretary, and other office bearers if required
- A general meeting will be held at least every 2 years.
- In any year that a conference or general meeting is not held, the Committee will issue a report on activities, including a financial report, and will call for online nominations to the Committee. If more than 10 nominations are received, an online vote will be conducted to determine the membership of the Committee.
- Will have broad geographic and political representation – it is desirable for the ARAN Committee to have at least one person from each state and territory on the Committee.

- The following groups will have a designated position on the ARAN committee, and it is the responsibility of these groups to select a suitable person if they wish to be represented on the ARAN Committee:
 - Rural Australians for Refugees
 - Grandmothers Against the Detention of Refugee Children
 - National Refugee Advisory and Advocacy Group (NGRAAG)

The Committee may request representation from particular groups including the Refugee Advocacy Network, DASSAN, Amnesty Refugee Networks, and any other network with significant membership or other relevance to the objectives of ARAN.

The Committee is authorised to co-opt up to 3 members to fill vacancies arising between elections or to extend the composition or skill base of the committee.

Where there the number of candidates does not exceed the number of positions on the Committee, candidates will be deemed elected as a matter of course.

Those elected to the ARAN Committee are elected for 12 months, with an option to serve a second 12 month term after which time they may stand for re-election.

People who have lived refugee experience, who belong to an ARAN member group, and who are actively involved in campaigning for Australia to uphold its international human rights obligations with regard to people seeking asylum, are encouraged to nominate for the ARAN National Committee.

The Committee may establish a reference group or list of people with lived experience to consult on key ARAN decisions regarding proposed campaigns

The Committee may establish working groups (on-going or time limited) and may invite people to assist the committee through such working groups. All ARAN Working /groups will be convened by an elected member of the Committee. ARAN Working Groups will provide an update to each ARAN Committee meeting.

Meeting arrangements

- The Committee will meet at least monthly but may meet more regularly if required.
- Meetings will be held online
- The Committee will determine chairing arrangements
- Agendas will be developed by the chair and circulated to Committee members by email at least 3 days before the meeting
- A quorum of half the number of total Committee members must be present in order for decisions to be made
- Meeting minutes will be taken by the secretary, and will be circulated to Committee members by email within 7 days of the meeting
- Communication between meetings will occur by email, with members using the 'reply all' function to involve all members in the ensuing discussion

Resources and budget

The ARAN Committee is authorised to raise funds for ARAN projects and activities which are consistent with the purpose of the Committee as outlined in this above. Budgets will be set accordingly. The signatures of two Committee members will be required for all withdrawals and expenditure.

Reporting

The Committee will provide an annual report at the national conference or general meeting.

Any income and expenditure will be reported to member organisations annually after the end of each financial year.

Review

Terms of Reference will be reviewed as required. Any amendments proposed by the Committee will be put for discussion at a General Meeting, or in the absence of a general meeting, distributed to ARAN members by email.