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**Resources for Refugee Groups**

**Federal Election 2021-2022**

It is anticipated that the Federal Election will be held sometime early next year - it must be by May 2022

We expect the major election issues will be the economy, the management of COVID-19 and vaccine coverage, climate change and corruption. Beyond that people will mostly focus on issues such as health, education, and taxes.

While there is a level of public awareness of the situation in Afghanistan, the issues for refugees and people seeking asylum who are in detention, those on Nauru and in PNG, and those on TPVs are unlikely to be vote changers for most Australians.

The current Coalition Government is unlikely to change its refugee policies, and the Labor Opposition is not going public with their policies on refugees, as they want to avoid a ‘soft on borders and people smugglers’ attack from the government. While imperfect, the Labor policy platform on refugees is significantly better than the government’s position. The ALP is committed to minimising the use of immigration detention, converting TPVs and SHEVs to permanent visas, providing support in the community for those on Bridging Visas, and ensuring processes which reduce the time people spend in the limbo of status determination. Detail of the ALP policy platform can be found here: <https://aran.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ALP-Refugee-policy-2021-L4R-Summary.pdf>

For a comparison of the policies of the major parties go to <http://craggeelong.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Choose-Fairness-And-Decency-Federal-Election-Strategy-.pdf> or contact CRAG at combinedrefugeeactiongroup@gmail.com

**Vote for a Better Australia**

The ARAN Committee members feel that our best efforts are directed at seeking a change of government. We suggest that fairer refugee policies would be one element in a package of more progressive policies.

**Handout cards:** the ARAN Committee has produced handout cards you can use or use for stalls, letterboxing, etc. These could be used single sided, but the intention was to print as a double-sided DL (3 per A4 sheet)

These can be downloaded from <https://aran.net.au/campaigns/upcoming-federal-election-advocating-for-change/>

A4 versions can also be downloaded - for use as signage on stalls, in windows, etc.

**To use in emails** – copy directly from this document





**Handout: Refugee Policies we could feel proud of**

In addition to these handout cards, the ARAN Committee has produced the following as a Word document which you can adapt, adding the logo and details for your local group.

You can download the template below from <https://aran.net.au/campaigns/upcoming-federal-election-advocating-for-change/>

**We call for just and humane refugee policies**

**Australia is one of the world’s wealthiest countries - we can afford to be kinder, more generous and more compassionate**

**We need fair and just policies for refugees and people who seek asylum.**

* It is often claimed that Australia is generous towards refugees. Is this true?
	+ Australia currently has a commitment to resettle just 13,750 refugees each year (the refugee quota) – but last year less than half of this number were resettled - even though Australia welcomed 160,000 migrants*– see more detail here* [*https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/refugee-program-smallest-in-45-years-while-migration-program-quota-filled/*](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/refugee-program-smallest-in-45-years-while-migration-program-quota-filled/)
	+ Canada, with a population of just 37million resettles 28,000 refugees each year (30% of all refugees resettled) – if we were doing as well as Canada we would resettle around 20,000 refugees every year.
* Taking our national wealth into consideration Australia rates 60th in the world for resettling people who seek asylum – such as people fleeing from Afghanistan. This shows our lack of commitment to the UN Refugee Convention which enshrines the right for any person to enter a country to seek asylum from persecution.

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| **The policies we want to see**  | **SAY NO to the policies of Morrison government**  |
| Australia has policies which welcome people who need protection including those who flee from danger and seek our protection – a right under the UN Refugee Convention  | Our current government says we have less obligation towards people who arrive in Australia seeking asylum - we punish people for seeking safety  |
| Fast and fair processes to determine refugee status  | Thousands of refugees in our community are in limbo for years  |
| Income support provided, work rights and assistance to find employment provided while refugee claims are being assessed | People are in destitution while their claims for protection are assessed  |
| People are not generally detained – and if so, only for short periods for health or security checks  | People are kept for long periods in immigration detention  |
| Priority is placed in keeping families together  | Families are separated by our refugee policies |
| Once assessed to be a refugee, permanent visa and timely pathways to citizenship | Many people who are recognised as refugees are only given Temporary Visas  |
| All claims for refugee status are processed in Australia  | Australia has an expensive and cruel offshore program which holds people in limbo offshore for decades  |

**Would you like to know more?**

*Contact us for more information – add your group’s contact details*

*Facebook link – website*

**Connect with your local *‘Voices of…’* group - seeking progressive independents to stand at the next federal election**

We know that progressive independent parliamentarians have been effective in advocating for better refugee policies. The *‘Voices of..’* campaign is drawing on the experience of the *Voices for Indi* campaign which has seen two progressive candidates hold what was formerly a long-term conservative electorate in rural Victoria.

The statement from the *Voices of Bradfield* shows that a focus on more compassion on issues of social justice is a key position of the ‘Voices of..’ movement: *We are looking for a determined and community minded person to represent our concerns around the ‘Four Cs’ – action on the Climate crisis, evident failings in the Covid response, the need for an ongoing Corruption inquiry in the form of a Federal Integrity Commission and real Compassion across a range of social justice issues.*

We encourage refugee advocacy groups to connect with local ‘*Voices of…’* groups to promote more progressive refugee policies. See further detail here: <https://www.michaelwest.com.au/voices-of-ignites-30-independent-movements-across-australia/> *: “ A group of truly independent representatives holding the balance of power in both houses of Parliament may be the best hope we have to restore trust in our faltering democracy.”* Also more information here: <https://independentvoices4senate.org/>

For a list of *‘Voices of ..*’ groups by electorate see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_grassroots_political_engagement_groups_in_Australia>

Also - you may be interested in the **Choose Fairness and Decency campaign** **– election scorecards** – produced by CRAG (Combined Refugee Action Group – Geelong)  – [see details here](https://aran.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Choose-Fairness-And-Decency-Federal-Election-Strategy-.pdf)