

## Issue for October 2022 Work Rights for People Seeking Asylum

Supported by ARAN, RAR, G4R, & NARN

Available to download at - <https://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org.au/rar-groups/online-group/>

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Photo courtesy of SSI

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Included in this kit is the information you need to create your own letters or use the proformas

- Guide and Background notes prepared by ARAN's Letter Writing Network.
- 2 proforma letters that you can copy (and personalise) to send by post or email.
- Postal Addresses for MPs and Senators
- Email addresses for MPs and Senators

### Personalised letters are best –

- You might like to use the **AIDA** principle
  - **A - Attention** - grab the recipient's attention. Say something positive about the reader that is directed towards the focus of your letter. Stimulate the recipient's curiosity
  - **I - Interest & Information** - encourage the recipient to read on.
  - **D - Desire** - Getting the reader to want to do what you are seeking - in their interest to do so.
  - **A - Action** - inform the reader of the action you want them to take.

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Regards,  
The ARAN Letter Writing Network  
[austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com](mailto:austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com)

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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION - Work Rights for People Seeking Asylum**

### **WHY THIS ISSUE IS IMPORTANT**

- Unfair, inconsistent visa conditions mean that many people are being denied the right to work while living as part of our community while they wait, often for years, to have their protection applications assessed.
- People who do not have the right to work, no access to income support, and no access Medicare, are entirely dependent on charity. This deprives them of the dignity of supporting themselves and their families, and the hope for a secure future.

### **Difficulties for People on Bridging Visas**

- As at 31<sup>st</sup> August last year, there were 38,513 people seeking asylum who are on Bridging Visas (RCOA).
- For people who are seeking to be recognised as refugees in Australia there is a confusing array of Bridging Visa conditions, with differing rights to work and access to services.
- People seeking asylum are often on Bridging Visas for several years as they wait for a decision to be made on their claim for protection. Some people on bridging visas have the right to work; others do not.
- Many people on Bridging Visas living in the community do not receive income support or housing assistance.
- Generally people on Bridging Visas do not have the right to study.
- Bridging Visas are usually issued for a short period, such as 6 months. When a person's visa expires, they lose their rights to work and to Medicare. Many people are waiting a long time to have their Bridging Visa renewed. As at 31/12/21, there were 2,437 people with no Bridging Visa because it had expired, and they were waiting for them to be renewed.
- The Labor Government can help restore dignity and independence by standardizing visa conditions to ensure all people seeking asylum have the right to work while in Australia.

### **The SSRS program needs to be restored**

- The Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) was designed to provide income support payments, access to case work support and counselling, and access to subsidised medicine to people who were waiting for their protection claim to be decided. However, previous Coalition governments tightened the eligibility criteria to the extent that very few people can now receive any support from SRSS.

### **Sources**

- RCOA - <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/asylum-community/>
- Asylum Insight - <https://www.asyluminsight.com/statistics>
- ASRC - <https://asrc.org.au/2022/07/29/3-changes-the-new-government-can-make-for-refugees/>

### **Choose 2 or 3 dot points to use in your letter - Paraphrase these using your own words.**

- Many thousands of people are on bridging visas, and while most have work rights, many are unnecessarily denied the right to work. Other people seeking asylum are in Community Detention and have no right to work.
- The Albanese Government's recent Jobs and Skills Summit sought ideas to address the critical labour shortage and skills gap in Australia.
- The majority of people seeking asylum who hold Bridging Visas are in their prime working age, between the ages of 18 and 45. Providing the right to work to all people seeking asylum in Australia would help boost the supply of workers in key areas of labour demand.
- All people living in Australia should have safety net support if they are unable to work to support themselves.

### **Key requests**

- Simplify the Bridging Visa system, grant the right to work and training, and access to Medicare to everyone on a Bridging Visa
- Grant open-ended Bridging Visas that cover the entire period of Status Determination, including during the appeals process, so that people do not continually have to renew their visas
- Restore an SRSS program that ensures fair and equitable access to the social safety net for people seeking asylum who cannot find employment or are otherwise unable to work.

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**Please use your own words when writing your letter.  
Our proforma letter is only a guide.**

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## **Addresses for your letters:**

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**1. Andrew Giles, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services & Multicultural Affairs**

The Hon Andrew Giles,  
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services & Multicultural Affairs  
PO Box 6022, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

Email: [Andrew.Giles.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Giles.MP@aph.gov.au)

Or use the following link to the Contact Form:

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators\\_and\\_Members/Contact\\_Senator\\_or\\_Member?MPID=243609](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Contact_Senator_or_Member?MPID=243609)

### **You may also like to send a copy of your email to:**

- Your local MP - [https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators\\_and\\_Members/Members](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members)
- Greens Senator Nick McKim [senator.mckim@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.mckim@aph.gov.au)
- **The Prime Minister**  
Prime Minister  
PO Box 6022, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600  
  
You cannot email the PM. Use the following link to the PM's Contact Form.  
<https://www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm>
- **Clare O'Neil, Minister for Home Affairs**  
The Hon Clare O'Neil  
Minister for Home Affairs  
PO Box 6022, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600  
  
Email: [Clare.Oneil.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Clare.Oneil.MP@aph.gov.au)  
  
Or use the Contact Form:  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators\\_and\\_Members/Contact\\_Senator\\_or\\_Member?MPID=140590](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Contact_Senator_or_Member?MPID=140590)

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### **Canberra Postal Address for all Senators**

PO Box 6100  
Senate,  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

### **Canberra Postal Address for all MPs**

PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

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Find electorate postal and email addresses for your local MP:

[https://www.aph.gov.au/senators\\_and\\_members/members](https://www.aph.gov.au/senators_and_members/members)

Email addresses for MPs and Senators - <https://aran.net.au/resources/letter-writing/>

**Email addresses for all Senators are on the next page**

You may also send a copy of your letter to Senators in your state:

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**EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR ALL SENATORS - UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2022**

Email addresses for all **ACT** senators - ready to copy and paste into "TO" section of your email:  
[senator.katy.gallagher@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.katy.gallagher@aph.gov.au); [Senator.David.Pocock@aph.gov.au](mailto:Senator.David.Pocock@aph.gov.au)

Email addresses for all **NSW** senators - ready to copy and paste into "TO" section of your email:  
[senator.ayres@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.ayres@aph.gov.au); [senator.bragg@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.bragg@aph.gov.au); [senator.cadell@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.cadell@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.davey@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.davey@aph.gov.au); [senator.faruqi@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.faruqi@aph.gov.au); [senator.hughes@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.hughes@aph.gov.au);  
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[senator.payne@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.payne@aph.gov.au); ; [senator.sheldon@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.sheldon@aph.gov.au); [senator.shoebridge@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.shoebridge@aph.gov.au)

Email addresses for all **NT** senators - ready to copy and paste into "TO" section of your email:  
[Senator.McCarthy@aph.gov.au](mailto:Senator.McCarthy@aph.gov.au); [senator.nampijinpaprice@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.nampijinpaprice@aph.gov.au)

Email addresses for all **Queensland** senators - ready to copy and paste into "TO" section of your email:  
[senator.canavan@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.canavan@aph.gov.au); [senator.chisholm@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.chisholm@aph.gov.au); [senator.green@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.green@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.hanson@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.hanson@aph.gov.au); [senator.mcdonald@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.mcdonald@aph.gov.au); [senator.mcgrath@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.mcgrath@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.rennick@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.rennick@aph.gov.au); [senator.roberts@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.roberts@aph.gov.au); [senator.scarr@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.scarr@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.stoker@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.stoker@aph.gov.au); [senator.waters@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.waters@aph.gov.au); [senator.watt@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.watt@aph.gov.au);

Email addresses for all **SA** senators - ready to copy and paste into "TO" section of your email:  
[senator.antic@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.antic@aph.gov.au); [senator.birmingham@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.birmingham@aph.gov.au); [senator.farrell@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.farrell@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.fawcett@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.fawcett@aph.gov.au); [senator.grogan@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.grogan@aph.gov.au); [senator.hanson-young@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.hanson-young@aph.gov.au);  
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[senator.ruston@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.ruston@aph.gov.au); [senator.marielle.smith@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.marielle.smith@aph.gov.au); [senator.wong@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.wong@aph.gov.au);

Email addresses for all **Tasmania** senators - ready to copy and paste into "TO" section of your email:  
[senator.askew@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.askew@aph.gov.au); [senator.bilyk@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.bilyk@aph.gov.au); [senator.carol.brown@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.carol.brown@aph.gov.au);  
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[senator.tyrrell@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.tyrrell@aph.gov.au); [senator.urquhart@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.urquhart@aph.gov.au); [senator.whish-wilson@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.whish-wilson@aph.gov.au);

Email addresses for all **Victorian** senators - ready to copy and paste into "TO" section of your email:  
[senator.babet@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.babet@aph.gov.au); [senator.ciccione@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.ciccione@aph.gov.au); [senator.henderson@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.henderson@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.hume@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.hume@aph.gov.au); [senator.mckenzie@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.mckenzie@aph.gov.au); [senator.paterson@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.paterson@aph.gov.au);  
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[senator.van@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.van@aph.gov.au); [senator.walsh@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.walsh@aph.gov.au); [senator.white@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.white@aph.gov.au)

Email addresses for all **WA** senators - ready to copy and paste into "TO" section of your email:  
[senator.brockman@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.brockman@aph.gov.au); [senator.cash@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.cash@aph.gov.au); [senator.cox@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.cox@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.dodson@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.dodson@aph.gov.au); [senator.lines@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.lines@aph.gov.au); [senator.matt.o'sullivan@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.matt.o'sullivan@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.pratt@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.pratt@aph.gov.au); [senator.reynolds@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.reynolds@aph.gov.au); [senator.small@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.small@aph.gov.au);  
[senator.smith@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.smith@aph.gov.au); [senator.steele-john@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.steele-john@aph.gov.au); [senator.sterle@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.sterle@aph.gov.au)

**NOTE:** If you are sending an email be sure to include your NAME and ADDRESS

Email addresses for MPs and Senators -

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators\\_and\\_Members/Members](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members)

The Subject line of your email could be - **CALL TO ACTION** ... .. (insert the issue)

## PROFORMA LETTER - Work Rights for People Seeking Asylum

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The Hon Andrew Giles, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services & Multicultural Affairs  
PO Box 6022, House of Representatives, Parliament House,  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I am writing regarding work rights for people seeking asylum.

Many difficulties in finding employment are caused by short term visas, and as you know, some bridging visa arrangements do not allow people to work.

Given that many people experience lengthy waiting periods for the determination of their refugee status, being unable to work causes serious difficulties. Many find themselves completely reliant on charity for their survival. Prolonged uncertainty and financial stress on these individuals and families is humiliating and detrimental.

The right to work, and a minimum safety net for those unable to work, is something we should provide to all those who live in Australia, regardless of their visa status. The dignity of work provides mental health and wellbeing benefits, while ensuring children and families do not live in poverty.

Providing work rights in the current economic environment makes sense. There are clearly economic benefits for individual people, but there are also economic benefits for Australia. Also, allowing people on Bridging Visas to study would mean they can undertake training relevant to labour shortages.

Bridging Visas which provide the right to work will ensure that all people who are seeking asylum, including those in the appeals processes, can live in our communities with dignity. Work and study rights will support long-term employment and provide a genuine level of security while refugee status is determined.

Government should provide open-ended bridging visas until refugee status is determined, as is the case for other types of bridging visas. This would alleviate much anxiety for people seeking protection, and greatly reduce the administrative burden for the Department.

I look forward to the Labor Government taking immediate action on this important matter.

Awaiting your reply

Sincerely

You name

Your address

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### Send a copy of your letters to your local MP

Dear ... .. (insert the name of your local MP)

Re: Work Rights for People Seeking Asylum

Please find attached copies of my letters to

1. ... .. (insert the name of MPs/Senators you have written to)
2. ... ..

Yours sincerely

Name:

Address: