

Palm Sunday 2024

Justice and Peace

**Permanent visas
for all refugees
Safety net for people
seeking asylum**



#justice4refugees #PermanentVisas

Peace and safety for all

There are wars in so many countries. Australia needs to offer compassionate protection to those who flee from war and persecution. All governments and citizens must protect human rights, protect civilians, and seek to build peace. There can be no lasting peace without justice.

Justice for refugees means:

- Permanent visas and family reunion for all refugees
- Fair and timely assessment of all claims for refugee status
- Health care, work rights, income support, and access to education for all seeking asylum
- Freedom - Release ALL refugees from detention
- Resettlement in Australia for refugees still remaining in Papua New Guinea (PNG)
- Resettlement of UNHCR registered refugees trapped in Indonesia
- An end to offshore processing and detention
- An increase in the humanitarian intake of refugees

While the Labor Government has brought some positive change, and the High Court has put an end to indefinite and arbitrary immigration detention, there are still thousands of refugees and people seeking asylum waiting for a safe and secure future.

ALL refugees need permanent visas and access to family reunion

In February 2023 the government announced that 19,000 people on temporary TPVs and SHEV visas will be granted permanent visas. However, under the flawed so-called 'Fast Track System', around 10,000 people have waited years to have their claims for refugee status determined, and many have been unfairly denied. The process is neither fast nor fair. These people need a fair and thorough review process that acknowledges the changing conditions in the countries they fled.

People who are seeking recognition as refugees need work rights and support in the community

People on bridging visas have no access to income support if they can't work enough to support themselves and their families. Being on short term visas they often find it difficult to find permanent work. Many do not have work rights or Medicare. They are often struggling in poverty and living in substandard and insecure housing. Adults who want to undertake further training are not eligible to build their work skills.

People who do not have permanent visas are unable to undertake tertiary study unless they pay international student fees. Young children cannot access early childhood education and people with disabilities are being denied NDIS funding.

All people who are seeking asylum need supports and opportunities to live in dignity, and not be at risk of destitution, while they wait for their refugee claims to be assessed.

No refugee or person seeking asylum should be deprived of their liberty

The Albanese Government has released a number of people from long term detention under very punitive conditions. Many of these people have not committed serious crimes, and some have never been accused of committing any crime. Anyone who has served a prison sentence in Australia should not be further deprived of their liberty but rather, they should be offered rehabilitation and allowed to live in the community.

Australia has abandoned 50 people seeking asylum in PNG and they are now desperate

Having been held in PNG for over 10 years and detained in terrible conditions for much of that time, these people have been abandoned. They need immediate pathways to safe resettlement here in Australia. Australia has spent billions of dollars detaining them in PNG and has a moral and legal duty of care for their welfare.

Offshore processing must end

Around 60 people are now being held on Nauru. They are facing offshore detention and years of uncertainty, paid for by Australians. We cannot allow this to continue. Around 1200 refugees who were held in detention in PNG and Nauru, before being brought here for medical treatment are now living on bridging visas indefinitely in Australia because our government refuses to grant them permanent visas. Most of these people are now working in Australia, paying taxes, and need to be offered secure futures.

Australia needs to provide resettlement for refugees stranded in Indonesia

Around 14,000 refugees and people seeking asylum from Afghanistan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka have been stuck in Indonesia since 2014 when the Australian Government refused to offer resettlement, even those registered with UNHCR. These people cannot be resettled in Indonesia and cannot return to their home countries. Australia must give equal opportunity for resettlement in Australia. Many of these people already have family members here.

The Australian government needs to significantly increase the quota for resettling refugees

The Albanese government has committed to increase the number of refugees to be resettled, and it is encouraging to see that in 2023-24 the quota will be raised to 20,000. Thousands of refugees are desperately waiting for resettlement, and we hope the government will continue to increase the humanitarian intake.