

Hello, Members!

Newsletter 1, August 2017

The ARAN Co-ordinating Committee has committed to preparing a regular newsletter to foster exchange between ARAN member groups and to provide updates on Committee activities.

We hope that you find the first ARAN Newsletter useful.

A key aim of the ARAN is to support more communication and co-operation between the many and various activist and advocacy groups across Australia which are working to bring about change in the policies impacting on people seeking asylum and refugees.

We are keen to hear from about the activities of your group and also any information or resources which you feel might be of use to others. If you have information you would like to be included in the next ARAN Newsletter – please email through to austrefugeeaction@gmail.com with ARAN Newsletter in subject line - by 31 August.

What's in this newsletter?

- Current campaign – Manus Island and Nauru Not Safe for Refugees – Bring Them Here
- * Update on other campaign activities that ARAN has supported so far, and ideas for the future
- News from ARAN member groups (if you have information to share send through so we can include in the next newsletter)
- Information on current issues
- Update on ARAN Networks
- Update from the ARAN Co-ordinating Committee

Current campaigns supported by ARAN

ARAN is calling on member groups to support the following campaigns:

1. Current campaign – Manus Island and Nauru Not Safe for Refugees – Bring Them Here

ARAN member groups are encouraged to plan actions at MPs offices during:

- a. week beginning 21 August and/or week beginning 28 August
- b. week beginning 18 September and/or week beginning 25 September

It would be great if you can plan to repeat the action at MPs office or rolling actions if possible. With Coalition MP Russell Broadbent publicly calling for refugees to be brought here, we need to build the momentum for this campaign.

See campaign resources at

<https://australianrefugeeactionnetwork.wordpress.com/manus-actions/>

Including:

- Poster
- Proforma media release
- Statement to sign and hand to MPs
- Handouts featuring 4 of the men on Manus
- Photographs from Manus Island
- Contact details for politicians and suggested points for phone calls, emails and letters.

IMPORTANT – As soon as you have details PLEASE LET THE ARAN COMMITTEE KNOW ABOUT YOUR ACTION – (and afterwards send photos with brief description) – and we will share on the ARAN Facebook and the

ARAN website. Email: austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com or FB message [Facebook](#)

2. National Actions on Sunday October 8 - Manus Island and Nauru Not Safe for Refugees – Bring Them Here

Major rallies will be organised in capital cities on Sunday 8 October – more details to follow.

Past Actions

ARAN called on member groups to support the following actions:

August 2017 - Tamils denied access to the US Deal

- ARAN circulated proforma media release to member groups

19 July 2017 - #Evacuate the Camps on Manus and Nauru

- ARAN supported GetUp's initiative to mark the 4th anniversary of Rudd's announcement that the camps on Manus and Nauru would be reopened.
- Over 50 actions around Australia were held - great work everyone! This was a great demonstration of the way ARAN can work to mobilise action cross the country.

March 2017 & June 2017 - National Call to Action Re: Unfair Protection Visa Application Deadline

- ARAN called for members to lobby Peter Dutton and write letters to MPs.

October 2016 - #Bring Them Here and Let Them Stay

- ARAN called for a week of actions and letter writing 30 Oct – 5 Nov to draw attention to situation of people on Nauru and Manus island

News on ARAN member groups' activities

In this section we plan to profile two or three stories each month (short paragraph with a pic)...So please send through any pictures with a brief caption/explanation to share in the next newsletter - please note that all 'news items' from member groups will be posted on the ARAN [website](#) even if they don't make it into the Newsletter because of space limitations.



19 July - Mornington Peninsula Human Rights Group did a day time action at the market, and handed out flyers..... and got coverage in their local paper

Member actions - 19 July



Burleigh Heads/Gold Coast



Melbourne



Newcastle



Sydney

Evacuate Now Vigil - Hobart



Updates from ARAN networks

At the ARAN conference in May there was discussion in a number of workshops about the forming of ARAN interest groups or sub-networks to foster sharing between groups doing similar types of activities, or groups with similar memberships – e.g. unions, faith-based groups etc.

The suggestions included:

- Lobbying and letterwriting
- Media Skills and getting media coverage for your activities
- Unions
- LGBTI
- Creative activism/ artists network
- Other

If you are interested in any of these – or other networking ideas between ARAN member groups the ARAN committee is keen to hear from you! Just email austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Update from the ARAN Committee

Since the National Conference, the ARAN National Coordination Committee has been meeting fortnightly by Skype. As agreed at the National ARAN conference, the Committee will co-opt up to three additional members - to strengthen representation from people with lived experience of seeking asylum, improve geographical coverage, and make sure the Committee has the skills it needs. Two new members have been co-opted so far: Kaliyugan Pathmanathan, from the Tamil Refugee Council and based in Perth, and Peter Robson, from Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network. Discussions are underway regarding the third co-opted position.

Since the conference in May, Committee members have been busy:

- Promoting national actions (Response to Dutton's October 1 deadline; July 19 vigils; August pressure on local MPs; October 8 events). It was very encouraging to see so many ARAN member groups respond to the call for action on 19 July – with

57
actions
across
the
country
—

a
fabulous
effort
everyone
!

and
such
an
affirmation
of
the
value
of
the
national
network.

- Preparing
and
distributing
draft
media
releases
for
use
by
ARAN
member
groups
- Participating
in
the
monthly
national
HRLC
/
GetUp
teleconferences
—
this
is
important
avenue
for
building
shared
effort
with
the
national
advocacy
organisations
(
ARAN
Associate
members)
- Developing
our
internal
processes
and
identifying
priority
tasks
- Developing
the
ARAN
website
to
provide
a
central
place
to
access
reports
and

resources
(this
is
a
work
in
progress)

- Developing
the
ARAN
Facebook
presence

- Collating
all
the
input
from
participants
at
the
National
Conference

—

we
are
aiming
to
have
the
full

report
completed
and
circulated
by
the
end
of
August.

- Responding
to
email
requests
and
inquiries

A total of 58 activist and advocacy groups have joined ARAN so far. There are a further 6 associate members.

ARAN membership as at 31 July 2017:

NATIONAL:

Academics for Refugees
Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA)
ChilOut
Doctors 4 Refugees
End Child Detention Coalition Australia
Love Makes a Way
Manus Emergency Fund
Mums 4 Refugees
People Just Like Us
Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR)
Sanctuary Australia Foundation
Tamil Refugee Council
Teachers for Refugees

ACT:

Refugee Action Committee, Canberra
Rural Australians for Refugees - Queanbeyan

NSW:

Amnesty International NSW Refugee Network
Community of South Sudanese and Other Marginalised Areas
Grandmothers against Detention of Refugee Children NSW
Home Among the Gum Trees NSW
Hunter Asylum Seeker Advocacy (Newcastle)

Mid North Coast Refugee Support Group
Refugee Action Coalition (Sydney)
Refugee Action Collective Eurobodalla
Refugee Action Collective Illawarra
Rural Australians for Refugees - Albury-Wodonga
Valerio Daniel De Simoni Association
Yass for Refugees

NT:
Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network (DASSAN)

QLD:
Brisbane Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support Network (BRASS)
Refugee Action Collective (Queensland)
Noosa Welcomes Refugees

SA:
Amnesty International SA Refugee Action Network
Australian Refugee Association (ARA)
Justice for Refugees
Semaphore/Port Adelaide Amnesty Action Group

TAS:
Amnesty International Tasmanian Refugee Action Group
Amnesty International Tasmania Branch
Amnesty International Tasmania Southern Group
Tasmanian Asylum Seeker Support
Tassie Nannas
Uniting Church Synod of Vic/Tas

VIC:
Amnesty International Vic Refugee Network
Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project
Close the Camps Action Collective
Combined Refugee Action Group (CRAG - Geelong)
Grandmothers Against Detention of Refugee Children
Law Students for Refugees
Refugee Action Collective (Victoria)
Refugee Advocacy Network
Rural Australians for Refugees - Aireys Inlet
Rural Australians for Refugees - Albury-Wodonga
Rural Australians for Refugees - Apollo Bay
Rural Australians for Refugees - Castlemaine
Rural Australians for Refugees - Mansfield
Rural Australians for Refugees - South Gippsland
Southern Women's Action Network (SWAN) - Mornington Peninsula
Uniting Church Synod of Vic/Tas

WA:
Refugee Rights Action Network (WA)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:
Amnesty International Australia (AIA)
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)
Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce
GetUp
Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC)
Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)

Useful resources

Manus Island & Nauru

1. Amnesty
has
created
a
short
?

4 minute
video
to
mark
the
4
years
of
the
Australian
Government's
current
offshore
refugee
detention
regime
and
the
many
preventable
tragedies.

Feel free to use the video at event or share on social media. Youtube version [here](#), FB version [here](#). Amnesty's media release & 4 year timeline is [here](#).

1. This
is
6
months
old
but
has
good
stats
on
offshore
and
a
listing
of
the
many
reports
into
the
offshore
camps.

http://www.apf.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick

Useful links:

- o [Refugee Council of Australia](#)
- o [Amnesty International](#)
- o [Kaldor Centre](#)
- o [Asylum Seeker Resource Centre](#)
- o [Australian Refugee Action Network](#) or on [facebook](#)

- Does your group have any resources you would like to share with other groups ?
- Are you looking for resources or information?
- Do you know of people with a public profile who have spoken out in support of refugees ?

Send us anything you would like to share with other ARAN member groups – or send your request... and we will include in the next ARAN Newsletter.

Other information

1 Share your stories of refugee advocacy and community initiatives supporting people seeking asylum and refugees

The New Community journal (Australia's only community development journal)is seeking stories for an edition of the journal: Refugees and Asylum Seekers: Community supports and political pressures (Volume 15, #4, Issue 60)

Submissions due: mid-November 2017 Email: Jacques Boulet
Borders@Borderlands.org.au

Australia has been repeatedly reprimanded by the United Nations for asylum seeker policies violating the letter and spirit of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. These reproaches seemingly have had little effect on the approach that consecutive governments have taken towards the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. Indeed, reports of abhorrent treatment and systematic cruelty and violence creating untold trauma continue to shock that part of the Australian public that has maintained a trace of humanity and compassion. However, we also see communities protesting and resisting the imposed policies and procedures; people gather to welcome refugees, finding ways to alleviate the consequences of their treatment. Citizens endeavour to humanise those in detention centres and bring their stories to the wider communities.

We invite stories about advocacy, and community initiatives working with refugees and asylum seekers: What is effective and what are the pressures and pitfalls, as well as the strategies? What community groups are pushing for systemic change and what kind of effect are they having? Where are refugees and asylum seekers being welcomed into the community, so that we can share these experiences? And what happens once people have been granted an Australian visa - what opportunities and community supports are available and how do they operate and sustain themselves?

For more info re New Community journal go to
<http://community.borderlands.org.au/> (PS: Jacques will be pleased to hear from you, and it a very affable and generous person, who will provide advice and assistance as required – Marie Hapke, ARAN Committee)

2 Symposium on university access for people seeking asylum and refugees

National Symposium: People Seeking Asylum and Higher Education

This one-day national symposium will bring together current students who are seeking asylum, refugees on temporary visas backgrounds, researchers, community organisations, caseworkers, professional staff and practitioners within the higher education system

This symposium will work towards identifying key research/advocacy priorities and the development of a report, which can be used to speak to these issues (with - not for - students seeking asylum) within Australian universities and to Universities Australia.

Date: Wednesday 15th November 2017, 9:00am – 4:00pm

Location: The University of Melbourne, Parkville

Donations: To support the attendance of people from asylum seeker and refugee backgrounds, participants will be recommended to provide a donation.

To express your interest as a participant who is seeking asylum or from a refugee background, or a staff or non-refugee student participant, please contact Lisa Hartley from the Centre for Human Rights Education, Curtin University at lisa.hartley@curtin.edu.au or phone (08) 9266 1678

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