



What's in the December 2020 ARAN Update:

CAMPAIGN ACTIONS

Resettlement for refugees still held in PNG and Nauru

Free the Refugees – Time for a Home

Permanent Protection

See links to Christmas cards for politicians

- * Biolela family
- * Income safety net

NEWS FROM THE SECTOR & ARAN MEMBER GROUPS

A GOOD NEWS STORY



CAMPAIGN ACTIONS

OFFSHORE POLICY A FAILURE

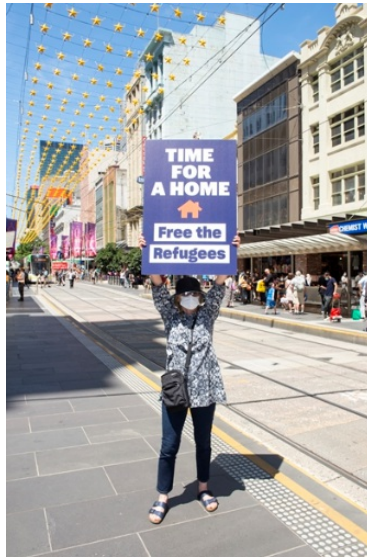
The Guardian has provided a comprehensive summary and analysis of the failed offshore policy: [Revealed: 1,500 people in limbo under Australia's 'bizarre and cruel' refugee deterrence policy | Australia news | The Guardian](#)

See Andrew Giles MP (ALP) speaking in parliament on the NZ offer:
<https://www.andrewgiles.com.au/media-centre/parliamentary-speeches/new-zealand-refugee-resettlement-offer/>

Email the PM (www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm), the new Immigration minister - Minister Alex Hawke Alex.Hawke.MP@aph.gov.au (02 6277 7110) and your local MP, encouraging them to take up the offer from New Zealand NOW – people have been waiting too long.

GameOver Resource Toolkit is on the Amnesty website -
<https://gameover.org.au/toolkit/>

Petition NZ PM Jacinda Ardern: <https://our.actionstation.org.nz/petitions/stand-up-for-refugees-on-manus-and-nauru>



National Campaign: FREE THE REFUGEES - END DETENTION - #TIME FOR A HOME

Actions were held around the country on and around Human Rights Day calling for the release of refugees from detention. Memes for social media are available here: www.timeforahome.com.au.

Freedom for Farhad Bandesh, and a few others [Hope for Australian immigration detainees after men freed under centuries-old legal principle \(sbs.com.au\)](http://sbs.com.au). It is not yet clear how many others may be released, but we are hopeful.

[Outcry re suburban-motel-is-used-to-detain-refugees](#)

[Medical staff challenge returns to detention](#)

Eureka Street article: [Remember those in permanent quarantine](#)

The Human Rights Commission has released its latest [annual report into conditions in Australia's detention centres](#). **The average time an individual spends in detention has blown out to a record 581 days** - significantly higher than any country comparable to Australia.

[ABC radio coverage](#)

[Canberra Times article](#)

[SBS coverage](#)

Actions:

Write to your local MP asking them to agitate for the release of refugees and people seeking asylum who have been held for more than 7 years in detention. All of these people have a right to freedom and dignity, and could be living in

the community - like thousands of others. Continuing their detention is harmful, costly and entirely unnecessary.

Amnesty [call to action](#) - contact Minister Dutton action

Petition: [Free Mantra refugees](#)



Biloela family now in detention for more than 1,000 days

It has been more than 1,000 days since Priya, her husband, Nades, and their two children, Kopika and Tharunicaa, 3, were moved from the regional Queensland town of Biloela, and the family is preparing to spend their third Christmas in immigration detention, their second on Christmas Island.

They have been the only detainees for more than a year, other than those in a separate part of the centre who have had their visas revoked after being convicted of crimes in Australia.

The family can only leave their accommodation to take Kopika to school, or to go to the recreation centre, and those trips must be authorised by Australian Border Force at least two days in advance.

They cannot visit friends on Christmas Island, and everywhere they go they are escorted by security guards.

[Story in The Guardian](#)

[DailyMail story](#)

See the coverage on [7.30 Report -15 Dec](#) (from 25mins 25sec)

Send a Christmas card to politicians Home to Bilo by Xmas -postcards

<https://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org.au/bring-the-tamil-family-hometobilo/>

Add your email to the 5,000+ already sent: [Email your MP](#)



INCOME SUPPORT – thousands of people seeking asylum have no safety net

Support agencies and volunteer groups have outlined how deeply troubled they are about the situation: “This group needs an income safety net, as NGOs can’t sustain paying rents for the long-term. We are paying an extra \$65,000/month on rentals and emergency relief since April and has increased to \$80,000/month since October. Many people will be unable to get or return to work post COVID.” Church-based group in Victoria

On 18 December Refugee Council of Australia released new report which showed that

88% of people seeking asylum have struggled to pay the rent due to the pandemic

70% have had to skip meals due to hardship

Over 60% had to borrow money to cover rent, food costs, pay utilities, or to buy medication Nearly 60% of the people seeking help from charities had lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic or had their hours so significantly reduced that they required financial assistance or access to a food bank

Over 50% of are at risk of eviction and homelessness.

The report is here: [Homelessness and Hunger Among People Seeking Asylum During COVID-19 – Refugee Council of Australia](#)

RCOA was successful in getting this story broadcast by ABC Radio National and also SBS:

Listen to the audio here: [ABC radio coverage](#).

See the [ABC RN online story](#), [SBS coverage](#) , and [RCOA media release](#)

Email a ready-made Christmas postcard to the Treasurer Josh Frydenberg – find it [here](#)

Write to your local MP, the Prime Minister and Minister Anne Ruston senator.ruston@aph.gov.au and call for these people to be provided with basic income safety net through Centrelink.

Sign and share the [Mums4Refugees petition](#)

Share social media posts tagging the responsible Minister Senator Ruston @Anne_Ruston and using the hashtag #NobodyLeftBehind.

PERMANENT PROTECTION - Sign the [petition](#) and follow and support the campaign here: <https://www.facebook.com/iranianwomensassociation/>



Action in Freemantle WA

NEWS FROM THE SECTOR & ARAN MEMBER GROUPS

WEBINARS on 21 January: hosted by the **Kaldor Centre** as part of a global conference celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

* **‘The Rohingya refugee crisis: Reflections from the region’, 3.00-4.30pm AEDT**, considers the Andaman Sea crisis and subsequent events to discuss paths forward. Chaired by the Kaldor Centre’s Madeline Gleeson, it will feature Keane Shum and Saw Mint from UNHCR (Bangkok); former political prisoner and founder of Women Peace Network and Yangon Youth Centre, Wai Wai Nu; Human Rights Watch’s Phil Robertson; and a representative from the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration. Register [here](#).

* 'Re-examining displacement in the context of disasters and climate change: A Pacific perspective', 4:45-6.15pm AEDT. Register [here](#).

TEMPORARY: The podcast: Introducing the eight-episode series from UNSW and Guardian Australia, hosted by Sisonke Msimang, where members of the legacy caseload tell their own stories. [Temporary](#)

Refugee Research Online provides a platform for academic and non-academic research and comment on issues surrounding people seeking asylum and refugees. <https://refugeereseearchonline.org/about/>

Australian Progress provides support to not-for-profit social justice groups: [Progress Capacity Building Hub — Australian Progress](#)

Access to AAP media database: Would your group like access to a comprehensive and searchable database of Australian media contacts? If so you might want to consider making a contribution to the annual subscription. Those who donate will be provided with details to access the database. If you are interested in finding our more contact Jane Salmon on 0417919354.

Action in Freemantle

A GOOD NEWS STORY from 2020:

Right Now – a reflection on the defeat of the Phone Ban Bill. The collective efforts of civil society ensured that the bill was not passed. Read Sangeetha's piece, '[The Legacy of the Asylum Seeker Phone Ban](#)'. Article by Sangeetha Pillai who provided powerful legal arguments against the bill, authored [two submissions](#), gave oral evidence to the parliamentary inquiry on the legislation, and numerous media appearances served to correct misconceptions about the proposals

FROM ARAN COMMITTEE

ARAN network of letter writing groups – next meeting 8pm on 13 January - email austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com if you would like to join.

Media reports -Looking for a news report? You might find it here: [ARAN website-Recent News](#)

Send us news from your group for inclusion in the next ARAN Update info-pics@aran.net.au

The ARAN Committee wishes everyone a time of refreshment as we reflect on the year that has been 2020, and anticipate what lies ahead on 2021.

Keep on keeping on – we are not there yet, but making progress!

If you would like to share news from your group in the next ARAN Update please send us details including an image on the [ARAN Contact Page form](#) with the ARAN member group.

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