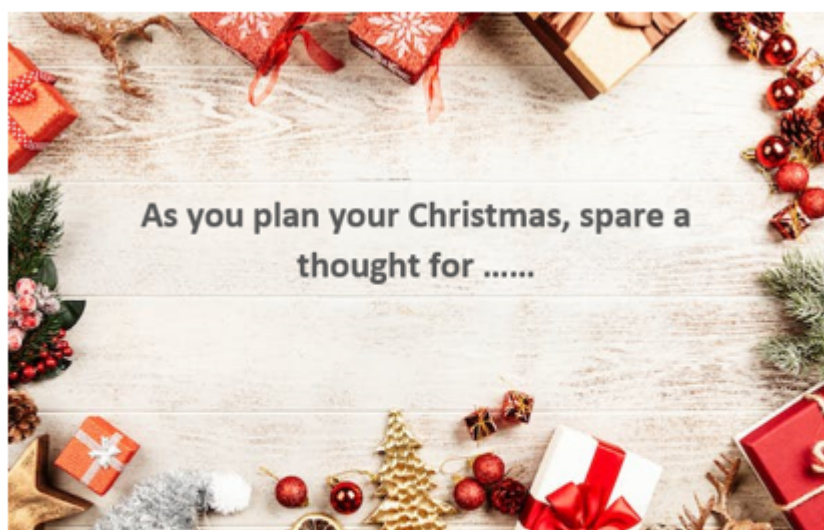


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December 2023 ARAN UPDATE

WHAT'S IN THE UPDATE?



..... the thousands of people seeking asylum who have no work rights, and no income support.

Many people seeking asylum are at risk of destitution and homelessness this Christmas. This is NOT OK

Immediate Action

- **Refugees in PNG is crisis - Refugee Off PNG campaign**
- **Send a Christmas message to politicians (snail mail or email) - and remind them that people on Bridging Visas need an income safety net. [See postcards and cards here](#)**

There is also a card you can send friends, and invite them to donate to help people seeking asylum at Christmas time.

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- **Email asking for Dixtan's release - see details below**

Other current issues and advocacy

- **High Court says no to indefinite immigration detention, but Government legislates to make it too easy to redetain**
- **10,000 people still in visas limbo - after 10 years on 'Fast Track'**
- **14,000 refugees still stuck in Indonesia - since 2014**

Upcoming dates

- **Wednesday 24 January - 7.30pm AEDT ARAN Forum to discuss Palm Sunday**
- **Early February - Protest at Parliament House calling for permanent visas - email mail@refugeeaction.org for details**
- **Palm Sunday 2024 - Sunday 24 March**

Good news

- **Campaign launch for Royal Commission**
- **Refugees Off PNG campaign delegation meets politicians**
- **Sr Brigid Arthur is awarded the UNANIMA International's Woman of Courage Award**
- **Christmas card for your friends and networks**

TAKE ACTION NOW:

Refugees in PNG is crisis - Refugee Off PNG campaign

Last chance to sign on to the [Transfer seriously ill refugees to Australia Petition](#) - make sure you sign by 14 December as it will be presented to Minister O'Neil soon after that date.

Urgently write to [Minister O'Neil](#), [Minister Giles](#) and [Minister Wong](#), and copy your local MP and Labor . Greens and supportive Independent Federal Senators - [find them here](#) Suggested key points for email s and letters:

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services, including access to medical services and a food allowance has been withdrawn

- Our government is still responsible for their welfare, having held them there for 10 years.
- An arrangement needs to be made immediately to ensure these people are safe in PNG, and have access to shelter, food and healthcare - or offer them the option of coming here.

Donate NOW to help support those who have no means of support and are at risk of losing their accommodation - Donate [here](#) and share through your networks.

Sign the [Statement of support](#)

- Sign the [ASRC petition](#)

Email asking for Dixtan's release

Calling on you to write (again perhaps) to urge the Minister to release Dixtan's and enable him to reunite with his mother.

Please write to Minister Andrew Giles, and cc local ALP MP or Labor Senators, and cc Julian Hill MP. Dixtan's mother Ms Reeta Arulruban lives in Julian Hill's electorate.

Dear Minister Giles (& cc local ALP MP Julian Hill MP and Labor Senators)

I am writing to urge you to intervene on behalf of Dixtan Arulruban. As you know Dixtan arrived in June 2019 and has been held in immigration detention for over four years since then. I understand Dixtan is seeking to stay in Australia to be with his mother, his only remaining immediate family member, but has not been granted refugee protection. As Reeta now has a permanent visa, this should be considered a special family reunion matter.

I feel that this situation calls for a compassionate response, for both Dixtan and his mother.

Please use your Ministerial powers to:

- Release Dixtan from detention so he can live with his mother
- Expedite the granting of a residence visa to Dixtan to reunite these family members.

(your name)

(your address)

Other important issues and advocacy

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The High Court made a long awaited decision for justice, ruling that indefinite immigration detention is not constitutional, overturning the infamous 2004 Al Kateb decision, which has seen thousands of people seeking asylum held in administrative detention for many years.

Advocates and refugee communities were deeply disappointed in the way the Labor Government handled their response to the decision, buying into the Opposition's fear-mongering narrative designed to fuel community anxiety and undermine Labor.

If you know anyone directly affected, it's important to link them with expert legal advice through Refugee Legal, RACS or the ASRC.

See [letter to Minister O'Neil written by Justice For Refugees SA](#)

[The Guardian news report is here](#)

In case you missed these commentary pieces, they are worth reading:

Ian MacFee, Immigration Minister in the Fraser Government, says he has "watched with dismay the shift in Australian public attitudes to refugees over the past two decades, since the Howard government began to pedal hard on the issue.." [Read more here](#)

Julia Baird asks "If we're willing to imprison outsiders for life, we must ask: Who are we?" [Read more here](#)

10,000 people still in visas limbo - after 10 years on 'Fast Track'

In September and October people from refugee communities trekked to Canberra to draw attention to the limbo.

- In September 22 women walked from Melbourne to Canberra, arriving in Canberra on 18 October. See a [summary of media for the WAVE Walk](#)
- An Iranian man who has been waiting 10 years for a permanent visa cycled from Brisbane to arrive in Canberra on 18 October. [See news report here](#)
- 15 women walked from Sydney, arriving in Canberra on 31 October, appealing to the Albanese Labor Government to implement the promise and to give a fair refugee application process for the 10,000 refugees who have been in limbo for over 10 years.

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- [Sign the ASRC petition here](#)

ARAN hosted a forum on 29 November. A number of groups are working to raise awareness of the need for Fair Process and Permanent Visas, and a Working Group will develop campaign resources to support local groups and advocates to campaign effectively on this issue. Two specific ideas were discussed:

- A national solidarity action in which individuals and groups can undertake walks in their local communities, and log their kilometres on a shared webpage for the 10,000kms for 10,000 visas initiative. Webpage to be developed - stay turned, and get your shoes on!
- Palm Sunday - 24 March - the issue of permanency is important, and needs to be highlighted at Palm Sunday actions.

If you would like to be involved in campaign planning, or would like updates, please email austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com.

Indonesia: Around 14,000 refugees are still stranded in Indonesia, in limbo since the ban on resettlement imposed by Australia in 2014.

It's time to demand that Labor ends the ban and brings the refugees here.

Good news

The campaign for a Royal Commission into Immigration Detention launched at Parliament House on 28 November.

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<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/01/the-australian-detention-system-was-established-to-destroy-us-but-we-refugees-are-still-here>

Members of the Refugees Off PNG campaign Working Group attended the Royal Commission campaign launch, and took the opportunity to meet with a number of politicians to discuss the current crisis for refugees in PNG, as services have been withdrawn. Open letters signed by over 300 members of faith communities, including faith leaders, and over 500 health professionals were presented.



L-R: Sr Jane Keogh, (Manus Lives Matter), Kevin Sweeney (National Amnesty Refugee Network), Father Peter Smith (Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney), Tim McKenna (National Vincentian Network), Behrouz Boochani, Farhad Bandesh (formerly detained in PNG). Also in the delegation but not pictured: Anglican Bishop Mark Short, Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, and Mainul Haque OAM (Former President, Canberra Muslim Community Inc and Gungahlin Mosque).

[The pain for Labor on immigration detention is not over – especially if the Coalition and Greens team up | Paul Karp | The Guardian](#)

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The UNANIMA International's Woman of Courage Award for 2024 which honours women from around the world who have exhibited exceptional courage and leadership to make a difference in their communities has been awarded to Sr. Brigid Arthur, CSB, who co-founded the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project in 2000, which currently houses over 200 people.

Congratulations Sr Brigid - you have inspired hope for thousands of refugees and people seeking asylum, and are a passionate and astute advocate for justice in local and national networks, including the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce.



Standing up for refugee rights in Hobart

DO YOU HAVE ANY GOOD NEWS?

Send us photos and details of your activities for the next ARAN Update. Please email to austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com

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