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December 2024 ARAN UPDATE



In this ARAN Update we have suggested actions to take to help support those who seek asylum in our country, but have so often faced enormous, and unnecessary obstacles - we need to keep doing all we can to bring about a fairer and more compassionate system based on human rights.

What a year it has been. All who have protested and advocated for the fair and compassionate treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum are shocked by the recent legislation of three Bills, to enable deportations with additional powers to remove people to places of potential danger, to rescind refugee status, and to deny people in immigration access to mobile phones. It's particularly disappointing that a new Deportation Bill was put forward, bundled into a 'Cruelty package' (with the previously put aside Deportation Bill from mid-2024, and 'phones' Bill that was hotly debated in

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again, Labor political strategists have sacrificed the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum. We need to send Labor a clear message - refugee rights are human rights, and must not be compromised in this way.

There is ongoing concern for those 40 or so men still stranded in Port Moresby, more than 11 years after being sent to detention in PNG. At last the Australian Government has recognized the need to reinstate a living allowance, but it looks like it will be inadequate for most of the men, and those who have families. Advocates are actively engaged in discussions - we need to keep pushing on this. A big call out to Sr Jane Keogh and all those who contributed towards the huge fundraising effort - raising over \$150,000 to provide for those in PNG. This effort will need to continue but at a reduced scale.

On a brighter note, we are feeling more hopeful for those unfairly denied refugee protection under the flawed Fast Track process. Hundreds of people still waiting for permanency after 12 long years held 24/7 protests in 5 cities - the 24/7 protest continues at the Minister's office in Sydney, and in other states protests are continuing on a more occasional basis. While there are indications that the Minister may be listening, we need to keep advocating for permanent visas.

Another year has passed, and around 14,000 refugees and people seeking asylum are still trapped in Indonesia, a situation largely created as a result of Australia's ban on resettling refugees who arrived in Indonesia after 30 June 2014, including as part of Australia's annual humanitarian intake. This ban remains in place and also prevents Australian citizens from privately sponsoring refugees trapped in Indonesia. A working group has been established to build a campaign on behalf of these people who still hope for a safe and secure future. You can find out more about the working group by emailing Niko Leka lekaniko@gmail.com

Despite setbacks, we will continue to agitate and advocate for much needed changes.

PLEASE TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO SEND A MESSAGE TO POLITICIANS:

Use the sample letters, or write a brief note in your own words.

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permanent visas.

- [ARAN letter kit & Christmas cards](#) in email and print format - calling for Human Rights and compassion. It's a quick way to send a message to your local MP and others - contact details in the kit.
- Suggested points for letters regarding the situation in PNG
[December letter](#)

You can [Donate NOW](#) to help support those trapped in Port Moresby

The ARAN Committee wishes you and your loved ones a peaceful and happy holiday and Christmas. We all need a time of refreshment, and we look forward to working with you in 2025 in the continuing campaign to achieve fairness and justice for refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia.

Some pictures from 2024



The Big Walk - local event in Ballarat February 2024 - hundreds of Australians from every state organised local walks and completed a virtual walk of over 73,626 kilometres in support of refugees still waiting for permanent visas after 12 long years.

The culmination of the Walk was a day at Parliament House where a delegation of eight Tamil, Iranian, Pakistani and Rohingya refugees, aged 17 to 27, addressed MPs from Labor, Greens and Independents at a



24/7 protests by refugees and their supporters were held in 5 cities from the end of July. In Sydney the protest continues, now over 130 days. This article sums up the protest: [“One Hundred Days Without Any Answers”: TRC’s Renuga Inpakumar on the 24/7 Refugee Camp at Burke’s Office](#) On 17 November hundreds walked 10 kms from the PM’s office in Marrickville to Minister Burke’s office in Punchbowl.

The 24/7 protests started on 29 July in Melbourne at then Minister Clare O’Neil’s office. The protest continued for 100 days - at Home Affairs office in Docklands, and also for about a month at Julian Hill’s office in Dandenong

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Protest by Canberra RAC for Permanent Visas



Protest in Canberra on 19 August drawing attention to situation for those stranded in PNG - organised by ASRC with support from Canberra RAC



Palm Sunday Walk for Peace and Justice in Melbourne

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A small group of Grandmothers at the Melbourne Palm Sunday

This year Grandmothers for Refugees marked the 10th anniversary since establishment as Grandmothers Against the Detention of Refugee Children in 2014.



Back Your Neighbour campaign - supported by the Local Government Mayoral Taskforce for People Seeking Asylum. See more information here: <https://backyourneighbour.com.au/> and how your group can request to be listed as a supporter <https://backyourneighbour.com.au/supporters/>



Members of Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group outside Anthony Albanese's office delivering the petition to support for Women in Afghanistan. <https://bmrsg.org.au/action-against-afghanistan-over-violations-of-human-rights-of-women-and-girls-australian-minister-for-foreign-affairs/>



Jackie Mayer, long time volunteer with BMRSG and founder of Youth Shoebox Project was presented as Blue Mountains Senior Citizen of the Year.

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Members of Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group outside Susan Templeman MP office on anniversary of 11 years of suffering for refugees in PNG



Rural Australians for Refugees held a very successful conference in Kyneton Victoria

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