



A Resource from the Justice and International Mission cluster,
Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Vic Tas

Refugee Week 2020

Sunday June 14 to Saturday June 20, 2020

WORLD REFUGEE DAY - Saturday 20 June

From our friends at the Refugee Council of Australia:

Looking how to get involved in Refugee Week in 2020?

Here are some simple actions you can take:

- **Host a Refugee Week event online or in-person** – [see full calendar of events or register your own here](#)
- **Become a Refugee Week Amplifier** – share videos, graphics, news articles during Refugee Week to help us spread the word – [sign up here to become an Amplifier](#) and we will send you content on a regular basis.
- **Display Refugee Week posters** – We will be providing downloadable posters to share online, on social media and to print out and display publicly. *2020 poster coming soon!*
- **Become a Refugee Week sponsor** – [check out the sponsor prospectus here](#)
- **Host a Share a Meal, Share a Story event** – in person or digitally, gather your friends and family together to share a special meal. With recipes and stories coming from our Refugee Week Ambassadors, this is the perfect way to reconnect with people after COVID-19 lockdown and raise much needed funds for the Refugee Council. [Register an event and donate here.](#)

From our friends at the Refugee Council of Australia:

https://action.refugeecouncil.org.au/rw20_events

This June, we will be bringing you the first ever **virtual Refugee Week!** We were hardly going to let a global health pandemic get in the way of celebrating Australia's incredible refugee communities. Whether or not we're still in lockdown come June, our Refugee Week team will be bringing you an awesome line-up so that you can join the celebrations from your own home.

You can find lots of great ideas of how to get involved in Refugee Week on our website - films, podcasts, poems, videos, songs, and more. [Check out our Resources Page to see what you can do.](#)

If you have resources that you think others could use, perhaps you have written a song, a poem or just know of a great film others should watch, then please email them to us at [refugeeweek@refugeecouncil.org.au!](mailto:refugeeweek@refugeecouncil.org.au)

We are running our usual Events Calendar, but of course things will be a little different. Register your event below if you want others to RSVP to it - it can be online or in-person.

[Social media campaign – and information about online forum on World Refugee Day](#)

The **Speaking Up for Refugees** social media campaign (18 May – 20 June) is seeking to raise awareness about the key issues for refugees and people seeking asylum, encourage people to take action online, and promote activities planned for Refugee Week. This campaign has been initiated by Refugee Advocacy Network and is supported by ARAN (Australian Refugee Action Network).

How you can support the social media campaign:

1. Please 'like' or follow the [Speaking Up for Refugees](#) Facebook page, and share our posts – ideally with a short comment.
2. **Create your own posts:**

Please use at least one of the following hashtags (in combination with a topic specific hashtag if you wish) **#justice4refugees** **#NobodyLeftBehind** **#GameOver**

 - post material relevant to the weekly theme:
 - 18 – 24 May Refugee stories of successful resettlement, include Biloela family
 - 25 May – 31 May Income support for all people on bridging visas - a fair go for all.
 - 1 June – 7 June End detention, release refugees from detention centres and hotels - fair processing -permanent protection
 - 8 June – 14 June Safe resettlement for those held in PNG and on Nauru
 - 15 June World Refugee Week – promote RCOA activities, other activities including the Speaking Up for Refugees online forum on World Refugee Day on June 20.
 - use your own material to develop posts, or visit the Social Media Resource page on the ARAN website: at <https://aran.net.au/social-media-hub/> for information and online actions you can include in your posts.
 - you can also use any of the meme templates on Social Media Resource page – but you will need to edit in Canva (download free version from <https://www.canva.com/>)
3. If you have material which you intend to post, and would like to share this with others please email to Dave info-pics@aran.net.au and ask him to add to the Social Media Resource page – please copy Marie into these emails on info@refugeeadvocacynetwork.org.au

Online Forum on WORLD REFUGEE DAY - Saturday 20 June 1-2pm

Join this discussion with special guests including Craig Foster ([Game Over](#) campaign), Angela Fredericks ([Back to Biloela](#) campaigner) and former refugee [Najeeba Wazefadost](#). Imagine a more welcoming Australia with us.

Refugee and People Asylum Seeker Fact Page

The Australia we know today would look very different without the 880,000 refugees we've taken in since the end of World War II. Global stability and economic insecurity are not new concepts. Over the last decade, there have been drastic policy and moral changes to the way Australia has responded to refugees and people seeking Asylum Seekers. The following two pages help to cut through the complexity by covering the basics.

2019 Refugee and Humanitarian Program

Australia distinguishes between onshore (applied for within Australia) and offshore visas (applied for while

outside Australia). For 2018-19, the allocation of places available under Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program is 18,750. There are the available visas:

Temporary Protection Visa (TPV – Subclass 785, onshore), **Safe Haven Enterprise Visa** (SHEV – Subclass 790, onshore), **Permanent Protection Visa** (Subclass 866, onshore). **Refugee Category Visa** (offshore) – this type of visa has several offshore subclasses, including; **Subclass 200** (Refugee), **Subclass 201** (In-country Special Humanitarian), **Subclass 203** (Emergency Rescue), **Subclass 204** (Woman at Risk).

The final refugee category visa is new **Global Special Humanitarian Visa** (Subclass 202). Through this visa, a refugee can access the **Community Support Program (CSP)**. This is where an individual, business or community organisation can sponsor a refugee for a Global Special Humanitarian Visa to be settled in Australia. Refugees are helped by the proposer to become financially self-sufficient within the first year of being in Australia.

Humanitarian Visa Allocations

Between 1984 and 2011 the average yearly intake of people under Australia's Humanitarian program was 12,986. Over 2017-2018, 74,080 people lodged applications for the 16,250 humanitarian visas granted during that period. Of this number, 7,909 were Offshore Refugee visas, 6,916 were Special Humanitarian Program Visas and 1,425 were permanent Protection Visas.

The Difference between a Person Seeking Asylum and a Refugee?

A person seeking **asylum** is someone looking for protection because they fear persecution, or they have experienced violence or human rights violations. A **refugee** is a person who asked for protection and was given refugee status under the United Nations 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. They may have been resettled in another country or be waiting for resettlement. Not every asylum seeker becomes a refugee, but every refugee starts out as an asylum seeker. A refugee is defined by Australia's *Migration Act 1958* as someone who "is outside their country of his or her nationality and, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution, is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country".

Offshore Detention (Pacific Solution)

Australia first introduced offshore processing in 2001 to process people seeking asylum seekers in the Republic of Nauru (Nauru) and Papua New Guinea's (PNG) Manus Island (Manus). It was first normalised as contemporary policy in 2012. Offshore detention applies to people arriving in Australia by boat without a valid visa. PNG and Nauru are responsible for processing the refugee claims of people seeking asylum.

2019 Detention and Community Statistics

As of March 2019, there are 1,312 people held in onshore detention within Australia. There is a total of 915 refugees and people seeking asylum held in offshore detention, 359 of whom are on Nauru, and 547 in PNG. A further 953 are in Australia with regard to receiving medical treatment who would otherwise be on Manus of Nauru.

Medevac Act 2019

The *Home Affairs Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous Measures) Act 2018* is commonly referred to as the Medevac Act, Medivac Act or the Urgent Medical Treatment (UMT) Act. This act was repealed at the end of 2019. Here's how it used to work; once two doctors recommend a person currently on Manus Island or Nauru in need of serious medical treatment be brought to Australia, the Minister of Home Affairs (Peter Dutton) will have three days to approve or deny the request. If the request is approved, they will be brought to Australia for treatment. If the Minister denies the request on health grounds, a panel of medical experts will have three days to review the case. If they recommend the person be brought to Australia, then their decision is final. In July 2019, the Minister presented a bill to Parliament to repeal the Medevac

Act. It was repealed in December 2019 after Jacqui Lambie sided with the government in the senate and voted for its repeal along with One Nation Senators.

Cost for Detention

It costs \$573,000 a year to hold an asylum seeker in offshore detention; more than \$346,000 to hold them in detention in Australia; \$103,343 for an asylum seeker to live in community detention in Australia; and \$10,221 for an asylum seeker to live in the community on a bridging visa while their claim is processed.

Children in Detention

In early 2019 the Australian Government declared no children were detained in Nauru, with the final four children sent to the United States. There have been over 200 held at Nauru. As of March 2019, less than five children remain in onshore community detention.

United States Resettlement Agreement

As of March 2019, 508 refugees have been resettled in the United States from Nauru and Manus Island as part of a 2016 agreement between the Australian and United States Government. Formal details of the agreement are not publically available, but it is reported that the US is considering taking up to 1,250 refugees.

Cambodia Resettlement Agreement

This agreement was made in 2014 to enable refugees processed on Nauru to relocate to Cambodia. This agreement cost the Australian Government \$15.5 million for direct resettlement costs, and \$40 million over four years as part of its official development assistance program. Seven refugees moved to Cambodia, and a total of three remain as of June 2019.

Legacy Caseload

This specifically refers to a group of 30,000 asylum seekers who travelled to Australia by sea between 2012 and 2014. Due to the politics at the time, this group of people has punitive measures placed on them restricting or removing their access to services, rights and legal assistance. As of May 2019 there were still 8,985 people waiting for the Department of Home Affairs to determine their visa eligibility, 4,682 of whom are waiting in Victoria.

Operation Sovereign Borders

This is a military-led border security operation established in 2013 to forcefully stop migrants and people seeking asylum from arriving in Australia by boat. The three key policies of this operation are

1. To turn back boats;
2. Prevent anyone travelling to Australia without a visa from remaining in Australia; and
3. Deter and stop the activities of people smugglers.

Asylum Seekers and Coronavirus

In May 2020 186 organisations across Australia wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Scott Morrison asking that people seeking asylum not be left out of crucial coronavirus related legislation. Here is an excerpt of that letter:

We need to ensure that all people in Australia are considered in COVID-19 policies and stimulus packages, especially the most vulnerable who currently are not able to access basic levels of support. Currently, there are highly vulnerable groups who have been left behind, including:

- People seeking asylum on bridging visas
- Temporary visa holders including refugees, temporary migrant workers and international students

As Australia and the world suffers the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clearer than ever that how we treat the most vulnerable in our society directly impacts the health and wellbeing of all of us. If anyone is left destitute, with no access to affordable medical help or unable to minimise the risk of catching the virus, all of us are at greater risk.

COVID-19 does not discriminate, and neither should access to a safety net or improved assistance during this time. We are in this together and there must be support for all who need it, regardless of visa status.

We ask you to lead the Australian Government to ensure that all people in Australia are protected from the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 by:

1. Ensuring all people have access to medical treatment and Medicare for people seeking asylum

2. Ensuring all people have a financial safety net so they are not forced into destitution:

- a. Extend JobSeeker to people on bridging visas currently ineligible for income support
- b. Extend JobKeeper to temporary visa holders so that businesses employing them can continue to operate
- c. Remove penalties for Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) holders accessing Special Benefit in light of the pandemic and remove restrictions on accessing Special Benefit for Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or SHEV holders who are studying

3. Preventing people from losing legal status and access to support