



JUNE 2012

# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC MIGRANT & REFUGEE OFFICE

## News

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### Getting Ready to Welcome Seasonal Workers



Australian farmers will be able to employ workers from the Pacific region and East Timor under the Seasonal Worker Program commencing on 1 July 2012. The program builds on the success of the Pacific seasonal worker pilot scheme which will conclude on 30 June 2012.

The Seasonal Worker Program will contribute to the economic development of Pacific Island countries with workers expected to come from East Timor, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The Seasonal Worker Program will also offer a reliable, returning workforce to Australian employers who are struggling to find local Australian workers. Employers will now have certainty at harvest time and seasonal workers will be able to improve their skills and have a level of financial security" said Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations, Financial Services and Superannuation, Bill Shorten MP when announcing the program.

*For all general enquiries please email  
[info@acmro.catholic.org.au](mailto:info@acmro.catholic.org.au)*



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Seasonal workers will be able to gain employment in the horticultural industry. During the initial pilot scheme, seasonal workers helped Australian growers on citrus, cucumbers, grapes, almonds, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, stone fruit, apples and more.

The Seasonal Worker Program will include up to 2000 places in 2012-13, with 2500 places available in 2013-14, another 3250 places in 2014-15, and up to 4250 places in 2015-16.

As a part of the Program, a small-scale trial will run for three years and offer up to 1,550 places for workers in the broader agricultural industry (particularly cotton and cane operations), aquaculture industry, and with accommodation providers in the tourism industry.

The Catholic Church, through the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO), has been part of the National Stakeholder Consultative Panel (NSCP) in order to assist with consultation and engagement in implementing the Seasonal Worker Program.

"We expect many of the workers coming over to participate in the program will also be looking to attend church services and participate in the life of the parish throughout their stay in Australia" said Fr Maurizio Pettenà, National Director of ACMRO, "Parishes and local community groups are encouraged to make these workers feel welcomed and included".



The length of time seasonal workers will stay in Australia depends on their employment offer which can range from a minimum of 14 weeks to 6 months. However, workers who gain employment for six months will be granted a Visa with a maximum stay of seven months.

All seasonal workers will receive comprehensive briefings on what to expect while working and living in Australia before they leave and again on arrival. Seasonal workers will be able to return to Australia in following seasons if employers continue to struggle to find local workers. This will provide Australian industries with opportunities to benefit from a reliable, returning workforce and also give seasonal workers the chance to benefit from remittances, skills and knowledge transfer.

- 2** Employers who fail to find Australian jobseekers will need to guarantee seasonal workers a minimum amount of work. Employers will also arrange suitable accommodation, health insurance



and transport to and from work. Seasonal workers will be paid in accordance with the relevant award or industrial instrument's, as such seasonal workers will not be a cheap labour option but rather will be paid the same amount that Australian workers would receive. Seasonal workers will also need to pay tax of around 15% for income earned during the seasonal worker program.

Seasonal workers will be provided with add-on skills training in Australia in English literacy, numeracy, first aid and/or basic computer skills. Returning seasonal workers will also receive recognition of prior learning against Australian Quality Training Framework competencies. The training will contribute to seasonal work opportunities on return home, including enterprise development and participation in further education and training.

For parishes interested in finding out more about the seasonal worker program and how they can be involved with workers in their local area please contact Joe Moloney at ACMRO on (02) 6201 9848 or e-mail [joe.moloney@acmro.catholic.org.au](mailto:joe.moloney@acmro.catholic.org.au) .

For organisations or employers looking to participate in the seasonal worker program and on further information on how to become an Approved Employer, please contact the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations on (02)6240 5234, or e-mail [seasonalworker@deewr.gov.au](mailto:seasonalworker@deewr.gov.au) or visit the website: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/seasonalworker> .

Source: [www.deewr.gov.au/pswps](http://www.deewr.gov.au/pswps)



Source: Photos courtesy of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations



HMAS Albany boarding SIEV 38  
(Source: Department of Defence)

## AUSTRALIA'S MORAL OBLIGATIONS TO PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM



Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office, in association with Australian Catholic University, invite you to attend the Second annual

### BISHOP JOSEPH GRECH MEMORIAL COLLOQUIUM ON ETHICS AND MIGRATION

#### WELCOME

Fr Maurizio Pettenà

Director of Australian Catholic  
Migrant and Refugee Office



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC  
MIGRANT & REFUGEE OFFICE

#### KEY NOTE SPEAKERS

Archbishop Denis J Hart DD

President of the Australian Catholic  
Bishops Conference

The Hon Chris Bowen

Minister for Immigration and Citizenship



#### MY STORY

The journey of an unaccompanied minor  
seeking asylum in Australia.

#### FACILITATOR

Santilla Chingaipe

SBS Radio Presenter

for more information:  
[info@acmro.catholic.org.au](mailto:info@acmro.catholic.org.au)

THURSDAY 30 AUGUST 2012 : 7PM- 9PM

CENTRAL HALL MELBOURNE CAMPUS : AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY,  
24 BRUNSWICK STREET, FITZROY

CAR PARKING IS AVAILABLE AT KINGS PARKING, YOUNG STREET, FITZROY [OFF VICTORIA PARADE]  
TRAM ROUTES 109 [BOX HILL VIA VICTORIA PARADE] AND 112 [WEST PRESTON VIA BRUNSWICK Street]  
METRO TRAIN TO PARLIAMENT STATION



# "I HAVE HEARD THEM CRYING OUT" Ex 3:7



## Third National Conference on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees

5-7 December 2012  
St Patrick's Campus ACU Melbourne

"Asylum seekers, who fled from persecution, violence and situations that put their life at risk, stand in need of our understanding and welcome, of respect for their human dignity and rights, as well as awareness of their duties. Their suffering pleads with individual states and the international community to adopt attitudes of reciprocal acceptance, overcoming fears and avoiding forms of discrimination, and to make provisions for concrete solidarity also through appropriate structures for hospitality and resettlement programmes. All this entails mutual help between the suffering regions and those which, already for years, have accepted a large number of fleeing people, as well as a greater sharing of responsibilities among States."

Pope Benedict XVI Migration and the New Evangelization Message for The World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2012)



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for more information : [info@acmro.catholic.org.au](mailto:info@acmro.catholic.org.au)



## Leaders of the Congregations and Provinces of the Sisters of St Joseph, Australia

### MEDIA RELEASE

#### Josephites urge humanity over deterrence for asylum seekers

The tragic news that yet another boat carrying asylum seekers has capsized has led Josephites around the world to plead with the Government to exercise humanity over talk of deterrence in its development of policy. With other Catholic groups who have spoken out this week, Josephites are concerned that politics and not compassion for some of the world's most vulnerable people is setting the political and media agenda. They are calling for the Government and Opposition to develop a new bipartisan asylum seeker policy, which focuses on the tragedy of people fleeing for their lives, rather than on off-shore processing and deterrence of so-called people smugglers.

'The situation is horrifying,' said Josephite Justice coordinator, Jan Barnett. 'So it is all the more disappointing that the response from the major parties appears to be focussed on deterrence, off-shore processing and political advantage. To speak in terms of a 'people swap', 'a deal to 'stop the boats' or to 'turn the boats around' belittles all that is good in our nation.

We know that people who seek asylum are desperate, that they are often fleeing for their lives, and that our current detention policy has failed, both as a deterrent and because of the trauma it creates for those who are detained.

Australia's response to the Vietnamese refugees in the 70's has created a model, which could enable us to hold our heads up once more. Josephites urge the Government to take a stance for justice and for a fair go for all.

27 June 2012

For comment: Contact Jan Barnett rsj. 0403 634 534

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Ph (2) 9929 7344 : Fax (2) 8912 4833  
[www.josephite.org.au](http://www.josephite.org.au)



## JRS calls for regional solution to refugee crisis

### MEDIA RELEASE

*25 June, 2012*

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Australia expresses its grief and sorrow over the most recent sinking of a boat in waters north of Christmas Island, with six asylum seekers confirmed dead, and up to 90 more presumed dead. This tragedy has taken place during International Refugee Week, a time to highlight the plight of refugees and asylum seekers the world over. A week that we hoped would focus on nurturing hope for refugees has instead become a time when they have been hunted down by death.

This is not the time to focus on the "evil of people smuggling", as some politicians have done in the wake of this tragedy in a bid to score political points. What is needed now is political leadership to craft a regional solution. Leaders need to take the necessary steps to protect asylum seekers in this region who are exercising their legal right to seek asylum and be considered for refugee status.

Asylum seekers get on boats because they are desperate and want to reach safe harbour in a place where they can find protection. Asylum seekers try to get to Australia, however perilous the journey, because it is the one country in the region where they believe they can get this protection.

This is not just an Australian problem: it is a regional refugee crisis. The countries north of Australia play host to far larger numbers of asylum seekers and refugees than the relatively small numbers that come to this country. A regional solution is needed for this regional crisis, and a fair and equitable solution will require burden-sharing across the region.

Tens of thousands of refugees in Malaysia wait for years to be resettled in third countries, and have few protections in that country during their wait. Is it any wonder that some take the decision to get on boats headed for Indonesia and then Australia? Australia's annual refugee intake of 13,750 could easily be increased, given that Australia took in almost 170,000 migrants in 2011.

Australia should also ramp up its ongoing efforts to persuade countries in the region to increase their protection spaces for refugees and asylum seekers. The human rights discourse in these countries is constantly evolving, and already in Malaysia there have been small but noticeable improvements in how refugees are treated. If asylum seekers experience security in countries of first refuge, they will be more likely to remain there while awaiting resettlement outcomes, and therefore less likely to make further perilous journeys in search of protection.



## **Mandatory detention of asylum seekers 'destructive of human dignity'**

***Lisa Beech, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand***

On the 17 June, the Catholic Church in New Zealand celebrated the Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants, meanwhile new immigration legislation was being considered by Parliament which proposes mandatory detention for groups of asylum seekers. Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand says we need to heed the warning of Australian Bishops that such detention is 'deeply destructive of human dignity'.

The *Immigration Amendment Bill* would allow the detention under a 'mass arrival warrant' of groups of 11 or more asylum seekers arriving together. Detention would be for an initial period of six months, which could be renewed for ongoing periods of 28 days. At present in New Zealand, most asylum seekers who claim refugee status live in the community while their claims are assessed, unless there are specific security concerns.

Because of our geographic isolation, very few asylum seekers reach New Zealand shores. Most New Zealanders are more familiar – and comfortable – with the concept of resettling refugees from the countries where they first seek asylum. However, the primary purpose of the Refugee Convention, to which New Zealand is a signatory, is to provide for the ability of people fleeing persecution to cross borders to ask for assistance.

Both resettled refugees coming under New Zealand's refugee quota, and asylum seekers arriving to ask for refuge are Convention refugees. However, the political debate around the *Immigration Amendment Bill* is labelling asylum-seeking refugees as 'queue-jumpers', 'illegal migrants' and 'people-smugglers'. None of these descriptions is true of the vast majority of people seeking refuge from violence and persecution.

Australia's Catholic Bishops have objected to the mandatory detention of refugees in Australia for over a decade. Detention beyond the minimum time necessary to carry out security and identity checks is 'gravely injurious' and unjustifiable, they say. They point to the 'widespread and significant psychological damage' caused, particularly to people who may have already been traumatised by violence, imprisonment and torture. They also note it is a very costly exercise in both financial and social terms.

Submissions on the *Immigration Amendment Bill* closed on 8 June. Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand made a submission, highlighting concerns about the detention of asylum seekers and other policy changes including:

- provision for the detention of children who are accompanied by their parents (only unaccompanied minors are specifically excluded from the Bill);
- provision for immigration staff to suspend the refugee application process;
- a proposed delay of three years after confirmation of refugee status before permanent residence would be considered;
- permanent restrictions on family reunification for mass arrivals – even after refugee status, residency and citizenship are granted. This would be limited only to spouses and children, not extended family members – a restriction not applied to other New Zealand permanent residents and citizens;
- restriction on access to judicial review of decisions, including the process of decision making.



The Gospel reading last Sunday 17 June, the Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants, told Christ's parable of the mustard seed. Despite being the smallest of all seeds, it grows into a plant able to offer shelter to the birds of the air. Many members of our New Zealand communities have arrived from refugee and migrant backgrounds and gone on to achieve and contribute a great deal to our communities.

The proposals for mandatory detention of asylum-seeking refugees could be compared to locking up the mustard seed, rather than allowing it to be planted in the ground, to grow and reach its potential. Over 90 percent of detained refugees in Australia eventually have their refugee status confirmed. Integration into Australian society is very much more difficult for them after long periods in detention, and also for their neighbours, schools, workplaces and communities.

Mandatory detention of refugees in Australia has been an extremely expensive way to ruin human lives. It should not even be considered for New Zealand.



*The submission by Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand will be available on the Caritas website soon [www.caritas.org.nz](http://www.caritas.org.nz)*

*The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office also made a submission on the Immigration Amendment Bill strongly cautioning against mandatory detention, to read the submission by ACMRO please visit [www.acmro.catholic.org.au](http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au)*

Photo: Welcome to Curtin Immigration Detention Facility

Source : AHRC



# Oriente Lumen Conference



## Oriente Lumen: Australasia and Oceania IV

Churches East and West  
Questioning the Modern Context

Melbourne, Australia  
4-7 July 2012

The Most Rev. Bruno Forte  
Archbishop of Chieti-Vasto

Mgr. Peter Fleetwood  
Archdiocese of Liverpool

Prof. Pavel Gavriluk  
University of St Thomas, Minnesota

Prof. Michael A. Gillespie  
Faculty of Philosophy, Arts and Sciences, Duke University

Prof. David Bentley Hart  
Eastern Orthodox Scholar and Theologian

Rev. Prof. Anthony Kelly CSSR  
Australian Catholic University

The Most Rev. Porfirije Perić  
Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Belgrade

Rev. Prof. Robert Gribben (Moderator)  
Co-Secretary, International Methodist-Orthodox Theological Dialogue

[www.orientalelumen.com.au](http://www.orientalelumen.com.au)



## **Australian Human Rights Commission welcomes moves towards better protections against torture**

**Media Release 21 June 2012**

The Australian Human Rights Commission has welcomed news today that the Treaties Committee has approved an international agreement that will lead to better monitoring of places of detention throughout Australia.

Commission President Catherine Branson QC, said the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) was an important human rights treaty that would help protect the rights of people deprived of their liberty.

"Approval of the Optional Protocol is to be welcomed. We now look forward to full ratification of OPCAT as soon as possible," Ms Branson said.

"The sooner Australia ratifies OPCAT, the sooner we will have a national monitoring system in place that will help protect the human rights of thousands of people in prisons, juvenile detention facilities, immigration detention centres and secure psychiatric facilities.

"Liberty is a fundamental human right and when we deprive someone of it, we have a responsibility to ensure that the conditions of detention do not undermine the fundamental human dignity of the person who is detained," she said.

"Ratification of OPCAT will provide Australia with the tools it needs to ensure we meet this responsibility."

**Media contact: Louise McDermott (02) 9284 9851 or 0419 258 597**



## Introduction to Refugee Women in Oz

The world is a small place and we are all mobile— it is a global village. To live comfortably in a global village, it's necessary to have a global mindset.

***Refugee Women in Oz*** teaches refugee and migrant women how to create change without compromising values.

***Refugee Women in Oz*** provide assistance to migrant women to create a fast track to successful integration through proven strategies; facilitating rapid transition from reliance on Government support to financial independence; creating a mindset shift at the cause level, moving refugees from learned helplessness to empowerment.

***Refugee Women in Oz*** gives clear step by step instructions to guide the women to create positive and sustainable change, linking the women to successful mentors who came to Australia as refugees themselves.

Our focus for Service Organizations is to sustainably reduce the demand on and current costs of the provision of services to refugees and migrants; to work with refugees and migrants at the cause level, rather than providing solutions for the symptoms of failed integration; and to fast-track the refugee and migrant journey from reliance on others to empowerment, financial independence and self-reliance.





## About Diane



Dianne Simboro is the founder and Director of Refugee Women in Oz Incorporated.

She lived in Burkina Faso (West Africa) for a period of time, creating my own successful home business from scratch, while struggling with the language and cultural traditions.

Dianne now works with refugee women to empower them to move beyond Government support; create more trustful and honest communication between refugees and Service Organizations; learn strategies to retain culture and create positive change, without compromising values; and empower their families to make their own decisions.

Please contact Dianne at [disimboro@yahoo.com.au](mailto:disimboro@yahoo.com.au) to find out more about Refugee Women in Oz and how they can contribute to your efforts with refugees and migrants.

# Tackle Asylum Seeker Phenomenon at the Source

## ACMRO Media Release 22 June 2012

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) expresses great sadness of the loss of life of the asylum seekers who's vessel capsised attempting to reach Australia.

"The decision to get on a boat in order to seek asylum is not made by someone who has any other choice" said Fr Maurizio Pettenà Director of ACMRO "No one wants to be an asylum seeker. No one wants to risk their life on open waters."

"This news will likely attract a lot of attention towards people smugglers and political concerns around offshore processing, let's not forget these tragedies are a reflection of a much greater issue" he said.

"There is a great and urgent need to tackle the phenomenon of asylum seekers at its source" said Fr Pettenà. Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Sri Lanka all feature in the top 20 countries at risk of serious human rights violations and mass killings.

"These people are desperate. We cannot expect asylum seekers will always behave rationally" he said "they know the boat journey is dangerous and they know they're likely to end up in detention, but in their situation, it is often seen as a necessary step in order to secure their long-term future".

ACMRO urge the government to explore alternative measures which would allow a number of these people who are most at risk to depart in an orderly fashion directly from countries of conflict and persecution and then be processed in Australia.

"Australia should explore suitable arrangements with countries like Afghanistan, Iran and Sri Lanka to allow people through an orderly process to escape at the source and take away the need for many to put themselves at the mercy of smugglers and dangerous boat journeys" said Fr Pettenà "currently these people have no alternatives".

We are greatly encouraged by Minister Bowen's call to increase Australia's humanitarian intake. "Quite simply, the demand for refugee visas far outstrips supply" said Fr Pettenà "Increasing the number of available places is by far our best solution to the asylum seeker phenomenon".

**For media enquiries or to arrange an interview with Fr Maurizio Pettenà please contact Joe Moloney on (02) 6201 9848.**

