



Refugee Communities Association of Australia Inc.
For Refugees / With Refugees / By Refugees

MEDIA RELEASE

January 16, 2026

Landmark Adelaide conference to give refugee communities a voice

An impressive line-up of leading international and Australian refugee advocates will headline this year's second Refugee Communities Association of Australia (RCAA) National Conference.

Iranian Kurdish journalist, human rights defender and writer Behrouz Boochani and former UNHCR Assistant Commissioner and former President of the Australian Human Rights Commission Dr Gilian Triggs are among the keynote speakers at the conference held at the Adelaide Festival Centre on March 25 and 26.

Mr Boochani was held in the Manus Island detention centre in Papua New Guinea between 2013 and its closure in 2017. He now lives in New Zealand where he is a research fellow at the University of Canterbury.

Also speaking at the conference will be the Co-Executive Director of the Rohingya Maiyafuinor Collaborative Network Noor Azizah, Co-Secretary General Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network Hafsar Tameesuddin, Chief Executive Officer, Scanlon Foundation Research Institute Anthea Hancocks, CEO of the Centre for Multicultural Youth Carmel Guerra OAM and Executive Director of the Australian Multicultural Foundation Hass Dellal AO.

The conference will focus on facilitating conversations, sharing knowledge, and increasing awareness of the lived experiences of new and emerging communities, migrants, and multicultural communities as well as highlighting their contributions to Australia.

Under the theme "Empowering Refugees and Multicultural Communities Together", the conference will explore how refugee communities move beyond initial settlement to multicultural leadership, ensuring their voices actively influence policies, services, and decision-making at all levels.

The long-term goal of RCAA is to establish a framework fostering a self-reliant, progressive, and culturally inclusive approach, strengthening refugee leadership through policy, advocacy, support, capacity building, and working with all stakeholders.

The conference is expected to bring together more than 250 delegates, representing more than 50 organisations. Attendees will include new and emerging communities, multicultural communities, refugee organisations, service providers, policymakers, academics, businesses, and representatives from all levels of government.

Contact: info@rcaoa.org.au | Twitter [@rcaoaustralia](https://twitter.com/rcaoaustralia) | <https://www.facebook.com/rcaoaustralia/>
ABN: 30 459 384 898 | Reg. No: A0098135A
PO BOX: 757, Pascoe Vale Victoria 3044, Australia
<https://www.rcaoa.org.au>



Refugee Communities Association of Australia Inc.

For Refugees | With Refugees | By Refugees

The conference will serve as a platform for meaningful engagement, collaboration, and innovation in multicultural leadership and integration. The conference will provide an opportunity to:

- Advance multicultural leadership and amplify their voices within Australian society
- Promote awareness of the contributions of refugee communities to the social and economic wellbeing, and rich cultural fabric of Australia
- Foster dialogue that encourages the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and solutions between new and emerging communities, service providers, and policymakers
- Strengthen the advocacy capacity of 'lived experience' led organisations and build a stronger, more cohesive network
- Develop a foundation of lived experience and evidence-based insights to shape policy and service delivery

RCAA Chair Parsu Sharma Luita said the conference would also feature case studies of successful multicultural sector led initiatives and examine how their approaches can be adapted and implemented by other agencies to enhance their leadership and support systems.

"It will also celebrate the role of lived experience in shaping service provision, employment pathways, and community programs and explore opportunities for partnerships between new and emerging communities, service providers, businesses, and government agencies," Mr Sharma Luita said.

A conference dinner will honour the rich cultural diversity of South Australia and celebrate the contributions of multicultural communities from across Australia.

Bringing together delegates, community leaders, and stakeholders, the dinner will be a night of connection, recognition, and cultural appreciation, reflecting the strength and resilience of our diverse communities.

Conference website and registration link: <https://rcaaconference2026.com.au/registration/>

About RCAA

The RCAA is Australia's first membership-based, refugee-led organisation (RLO), distinguished by its strong grassroots foundation and extensive reach with refugee communities and key stakeholders. RCAA unites over 70 member organisations nationwide and thousands of individuals, each embodying the resilience, strength, and rich diversity of refugee communities.

Together, RCAA forms a collective force that amplifies diverse voices, advocates for systemic change, and strengthens the already rich fabric of Australia's multiculturalism. With leadership drawn directly from



Refugee Communities Association of Australia Inc.
For Refugees / With Refugees / By Refugees

those with lived experience, RCAA ensures that policies and programs impacting these communities are shaped by those with lived experience.

For images, interviews and more information please contact Laurie Nowell at nowelll@ames.net.au or 9938 4031 or 0498 196 500.