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

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Media Release

Protecting fairness, dignity and Australia's refugee and humanitarian legacy

The Refugee Communities Association of Australia (RCAA), together with its member organisations and refugee-led communities, is deeply concerned by reports that the Australian Government is considering changes that could remove work rights, restrict family reunion and reduce access to fair review processes for people seeking asylum, stateless people and other temporary visa holders seeking humanitarian protection in Australia.

While the Government is yet to announce the details, these reports have created fear, anxiety and uncertainty among affected refugee communities. RCAA joins refugee-led organisations, charities, advocacy bodies and human rights organisations in calling on the Government to protect the rights, safety and dignity of people seeking protection. **Read the joint letter to the Prime Minister here.**

The right to work allows people to support themselves and their families while contributing to Australia. Refugees have made significant contributions across all areas of Australian life, including business, employment, regional communities, health, education, community services and sporting field. Removing work rights would increase the risk of poverty, homelessness and exploitation, while placing further pressure on charities and community organisations already operating with limited resources.

Australia's protection system faces serious delays. These challenges can be addressed by improving the quality and timeliness of decision-making while ensuring people are treated fairly and with dignity. Access to independent merits review, legal assistance and properly resourced decision-making remains essential, as incorrect decisions can have serious consequences for people seeking protection.

In November 2025, the Australian Government granted its one-millionth refugee visa since the post-war humanitarian program began in 1947, marking one million people given safety and the opportunity to rebuild their lives in Australia. Introducing sweeping restrictions now would contradict the legacy of this achievement and could weaken Australia's international reputation as a compassionate nation, one of the world's most successful multicultural countries and a global leader in refugee resettlement.

RCAA calls on the Australian Government to uphold its commitment to protecting the annual refugee and humanitarian intake of 20,000 places and to ensure the full program is delivered on schedule. Work rights, fair review processes and compassionate family reunion pathways must also be protected for people seeking safety.

As part of this call, RCAA is urging the Australian Government to convene an urgent community roundtable with refugee-led and lived-experience organisations before making any changes. With growing anxiety about the current public discussion surrounding refugees and Australia's humanitarian program, the roundtable would ensure that community knowledge and experience help shape fair, practical and responsive policies.

Refugees, people seeking asylum and stateless people should never become targets of political fear and division. They have come to Australia seeking safety after escaping war, conflict and disaster in their home countries.

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RCAA is an independent, membership-based and refugee-led national peak advocacy organisation. It amplifies the voices of grassroots refugee communities, people seeking asylum and stateless people, and works with governments, service providers and other stakeholders across Australia.

Contact RCAA spokesperson for enquiries on 0412 265 317 or email at admin@rcaoa.org.au.

Supported by the representatives and members of refugee-led, multicultural, multifaith and grassroots community organisations listed below:

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3. Altaf Hussein, President, Hazara Noorband Association
4. Andrew Gai, Co-Founder, South Sudanese Academic Society of Victoria
5. Assumani Kipala, President, Cairns Congolese Association.
6. Ava Ebrahimi, Public Officer, Launceston Hazara Association
7. Cr John Haddad, President, Beth Narain Assyrian Association
8. Dr Berhan Ahmed, Chief Executive Officer, Africause
9. Dr Mohamed Mohideen OAM JP, President, Islamic Council of Victoria
10. Elijah Buol OAM, Former Refugee and Chair, Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland
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12. Geeta Gurung, Chairperson, Mountain Mothers Foundation
13. Hanisha Sharma-Luital, Chairperson, Help Himalayan Youth Foundation (HHYF)
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18. Mae Sie Win, Treasurer, The Karenni Federation of Australia
19. Mariella Teuira, ITIKI Sporting Club of Glenroy
20. Meelan Rana, Chairperson, Himalayan Organisation for Multicultural Communities
21. Michael Foldi, Director, Auschin Foundation Ltd
22. Padam Magar, President, Bhutanese Magar Samaj of Cairns
23. Philip Lahpai, President, Kachin Association Victoria
24. Robert Lingtun, General Secretary, Burmese Welfare Association of Australia
25. Subash Chetri, President, GOPIO Cairns (Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin)
26. Tejman Monger, President, Cairns Bhutanese Community
27. Thaw Zin Htun, President, Victoria Arakanese Association (VAA)
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