

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Catholic Religious Australia endorses global compacts on migration and refugees

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) has wholeheartedly endorsed the two Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees adopted by the United Nations in the past month. As a concerted response to the unprecedented global movements of people across the world, these Compacts have developed new possibilities for international co-operation.

“We are delighted to endorse both Compacts,’ said Sr Monica Cavanagh rsj, president of CRA. “At this critical time, they so clearly support the human rights and dignity of all. In the face of increasing pressures of historic movements of peoples across the world, they are a clear embodiment of the call to us as an international community to co-operate and respond together in just and humane ways.”

CRA welcomes Australia’s decision to join 181 countries in support of the Global Compact on refugees. In its outline of concrete steps for international cooperation in the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees, it represents a new development for our world.

While affirming this decision, however, religious leaders are deeply concerned about the Australian Government’s refusal to join 164 other countries and endorse the accompanying Compact on Migration. The Government argues that the latter would compromise Australia’s sovereignty. This is simply not true. Neither Compact is a formal treaty but a framework for international cooperation. Perhaps it is the fact that it will serve to highlight Australia’s harsh and internationally illegal policies that is concerning the Government.

“We believe that wide international support for both Compacts will lead to greater justice and de-politicisation of the plight of vulnerable individuals and families compelled to leave their countries in search of safety and a new life,” said Sr Monica. “Their objectives for safe, orderly and regular migration will strengthen international co-operation and enhance good government and peace across the world. We urge the Australian Government to join the world community and lead our country to a new vision and a new reality.”

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