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Refugee Week’s million stories call us to action: CAPSA

Refugee Week (14-20 June) is a chance to reflect on the more than one million permanent humanitarian visas issued by Australia since World War II – and to celebrate the people and stories behind the number, says the Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA).

“The theme of this 40th Refugee Week, A Million Stories, reminds us that the story of each person welcomed to Australia is unique. The way these stories weave together shapes the communities across Australia in which we live in today - we celebrate their valuable contribution to our way of life,” says Julie Edwards, CEO of Jesuit Social Services and Convenor of CAPSA.

CAPSA is an alliance guided by Catholic Social Teaching which promotes more compassionate treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum. CAPSA and its member organisations continue to call on the Federal Government to commit to policies that uphold the dignity and rights of refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia.

Ms Edwards says that as we celebrate these powerful stories of welcome which have built modern Australia during Refugee Week, we must also look to the future and continue to fight for the more humane and dignified treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum. Ms Edwards says that with climate-related disasters having forcibly displaced 250 million people globally over the past decade, according to the UNHRC, much more needs to be done to address climate change.

“Unfortunately, the Labor Government - with its huge mandate to govern fairly – has not ended the suffering and uncertainty for people seeking asylum. People seeking asylum continue to be denied access to work and study rights and other public services including Medicare, housing and financial support, and fair pathways to permanency in Australia,” said Ms Edwards.

The recent Federal Budget contained no transparency around the Government’s offshore processing deal with Nauru; no clarity on future humanitarian intake levels; and no increase to work and study rights or a safety net for those who languish in Australia, denied certainty about their future.

“This Refugee Week, with rising support for One Nation and an increase in racist and anti-immigration sentiment, it is more important than ever to show our support for those who seek safety in Australia.

“We call on the Government to show moral leadership, leveraging its majority in Parliament to ensure Australia’s treatment of people seeking asylum reflects our collective values of solidarity, compassion, respect for human dignity, and our desire to do good.”

CAPSA encourages everyone to learn more and get involved with Refugee Week 2026:

<https://www.refugeeweek.org.au/>

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