MEDIA RELEASE

Catholic Social Services Australia

Migrants and Refugees Are 'Privileged Witnesses of Hope.' Catholic Social Services Australia Responds to One Nation Policy Announcement

18 November 2026

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) acknowledges the recent announcement by One Nation to cut Australia's humanitarian intake by 90 per cent, reducing the annual refugee intake from 20,000 to 2,000 places. CSSA reiterates its firm position that such a drastic reduction would be deeply concerning at a time when global displacement is at record levels.

Dr Jerry Nockles, CEO of CSSA, said, "The humanitarian intake is not just a number: it represents real people – families fleeing unimaginable hardship and danger. Cutting this intake by 90 per cent would send a troubling message about our national conscience at a time when global displacement has never been higher."

"Our commitment to a generous humanitarian intake is deeply rooted in the conviction to uphold the dignity of every human person. As Pope Leo XIV reminds us, migrants and refugees are 'privileged witnesses of hope' – their resilience and faith amid hardship bear heroic testimony to a future of peace and human flourishing.

"In welcoming them, Australia lives out a mission of compassion and solidarity, reflecting the very heart of a Christian vocation."

Australia's migration program, particularly its humanitarian intake, is a vital expression of our nation's compassion and commitment to protecting the world's most vulnerable. As the world faces unprecedented challenges with more than 41 million refugees and millions more displaced or seeking asylum, Australia must retain a generous and non-discriminatory humanitarian intake.

"Australia's strength lies in its tradition of compassion and respect for human dignity. We urge all political leaders to uphold this tradition and ensure that the humanitarian intake remains protected in line with existing government policy and is continued in future years, consistent with Australia's humanitarian commitments," said Dr Nockles.

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CSSA affirms that it is both legitimate and necessary for migration policy to be debated openly and transparently. However, the humanitarian intake must remain a clear priority, reflecting Australia's enduring commitment to provide refuge to those in desperate need.

Dr Nockles added: "As the world becomes more challenging with so many people on the move, Australia must continue to lead with generosity and compassion. Our humanitarian intake is a reflection of who we are as a nation."

CSSA calls on all political leaders to engage in this debate with integrity and respect for human dignity, ensuring policies reflect the best interests of the whole community. Thoughtful, transparent policy-making is essential to address genuine challenges such as housing affordability and infrastructure pressures without resorting to reactive or divisive measures.

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About CSSA

CSSA is the national peak body for Catholic social service providers. CSSA's network of forty-two member agencies runs across all Australian States and Territories with a combined total of over seven hundred sites, delivering essential services to vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians.

Media Contact

CSSA | Carmel Sefian | 02 6285 1366 | carmel.sefian@cssa.org.au