



Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group inc
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Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group Inc. Policy 2018

- 1. BMRSG believes we should treat people seeking safety the way we would like to be treated ourselves. Seeking asylum is a fundamental human right. Australia needs to sign on to the proposed UN Global Compact on Refugees in 2018 and promote it through the UN Human Rights Council. The following strategies provide decent alternatives to our current harsh deterrent policies towards people seeking safety in our region.**
- 2. We need to work closely with our global and regional neighbours to hold those states accountable who are persecuting their minority groups, forcing these people to become refugees in our region:** In particular the Rohingya and other ethnic groups in Myanmar, Tamils in Sri Lanka and Hazara in Afghanistan.
- 3. Our Aid Program needs to be boosted, not cut, to help poorer countries, especially our neighbours, to support refugees** by providing legal recognition, safe housing, education and health care. If refugees are in a safe place and are being processed by UNHCR there will be no need to undertake risky boat journeys.
- 4. The processing of refugee claims both inside and outside of Australia must be fair, humane and timely. We must provide the funds for UNHCR to do this in our region.** We should try to make the world a safer place, especially for children. The current system forces people seeking asylum to face years of delay, depriving them of the chance to rebuild their lives and contribute to their family and community.
- 5. We must create a fair, efficient and humane asylum seeker process** to show that when people are in harms way we'll do the right thing. This will give Australia a credible voice in our region.
- 6. Timely search and rescue operations, which are open to public scrutiny, need to be in place to save lives.**
- 7. Adequate financial support needs to be provided to people in Australia who are claiming asylum, while their visa applications are being processed.**
- 8. Offshore detention centres must be closed and those who are assessed as refugees integrated into our communities.** Onshore detention should be limited to 3 months, the current securitised procedures for detention visits must be immediately reversed and a humane, respectful environment provided. Families should not be separated.
- 9. Refugees bring skills and qualifications, which help us all thrive as a community.** We need to include refugees in our skilled migrant, student and family re-union programs, increase our community sponsorship of refugees for regional areas and boost our refugee intake by 20,000 per year with preference for refugees currently in our region.
- 10. We support an Australian Bill of Rights. Fair treatment of refugees is not about left or right politics but simply about right and wrong.**