

DRAFT letter to local MP and/or Senators

Dear XXXX

We are writing to you about a matter that is close to our heart, our values and our understanding of who we are as a nation. We write as people of faith who have been asked by Pope Francis to recognise this time to honor St Joseph the Refugee. St Joseph cared for his young family so well that he fled to Egypt rather than risk his little son's life to the capriciousness and cruelty of King Herod. We are part of a national movement of ~~schools~~, parishes, service providers, clergy and Religious orders, and we number in the many thousands.

We write to you to ask that, in light of the changes of the past five years, it is time for the Morrison government to fix a wrong many years in the making. Since 2012, people seeking asylum and refugees have been unable to put down roots, give back to the community or make a home here. While it was nobody's intention to do so, this has led to great ongoing harm.

We know this because during these years of hardship for refugees and people seeking asylum, we have become part of the quiet army of volunteers feeding, housing and caring for the thousands of families and young men and women who came to us seeking protection. We know how tired they are of living hand to mouth day in day out. We know because we also begin to tire.

But we believe there are solutions the Morrison government can implement that will not only save the Australian economy billions, it will also enable brave and tenacious people to give back to Australia as they build a home here. So we are asking for three changes to the way we treat those who seek our protection in light of these global changes.

They are:

1. Provide income support and a financial safety net for all people seeking asylum while they are in Australia
2. Provide access to a fair, timely and common refugee status determination process (RSD) for all people seeking asylum and access to permanent protection to all refugees in Australia's care
3. Ensure access to family reunion for all refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia's care.

We are committed to providing the care and support for those who come to us seeking protection. However, to be so involved in a government policy so at odds with our values and beliefs is an on-going issue for many. Resolving the legacy caseload in a sustainable, legal and humane fashion restores all our faith in our work, our nation and our government.

PERHAPS INCLUDE AN ASK TO MEET WITH THE LOCAL MP AT THE END.

Yours sincerely,

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