

Tuesday 20 July 2021

Catholic religious urge Government to reform refugee and asylum seeker policies

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) has written to the Government highlighting where its refugee and asylum seeker policies do not uphold Australia's international human rights obligations, contrary to the Government's insistence otherwise. The United Nations Human Rights Council has reached the same conclusions in its recent Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

The UPR assesses the human rights records of United Nations Member States and addresses human rights violations wherever they occur. Australia has rejected the UPR's recommendations to end the mandatory detention of asylum seekers and close offshore processing centres.

CRA President, Br Peter Carroll FMS, said, "Australia's third UPR was a chance for the Government to respond to recommendations from UN member countries and Australians, including some religious congregations, to make positive changes to our refugee and asylum seeker policies. It is extremely disappointing that the Government has rebuffed these recommendations."

"We will continue to advocate against the Government's policy of mandatory and long-term detention of asylum seekers, including children, which breaches its obligations under the *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*," he added.

"Despite the Murugappan family not having been in the media in recent weeks, their treatment and the uncertainty that remains about their future is still a live issue and a clear example of how Australia's migration policies are failing to uphold the rights of some of the world's most vulnerable people, especially children," said Anne Walker, CRA National Executive Director.

"We stand together with so many Australians and continue to ask that, on compassionate grounds, the Immigration Minister uses his ministerial discretionary powers to allow the Murugappan family to live permanently in Biloela, having suffered enough under Australia's asylum seeker processes and systems," she said.

Br Carroll and Ms Walker urged the government to embrace the 2021 National Refugee Week theme, *unity – the way forward*, to enrich Australian society through the diverse cultures and traditions, skills, talents and friendships that refugees and asylum seekers will bring.

Click here to read CRA's letters to the [Prime Minister](#), to [Minister Alex Hawke and Minister Karen Andrews](#), and to Labour Leader, [Minister Anthony Albanese](#).

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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