

Baptcare's Social Policy



We encourage Australians from all walks of life to join us in seeking to work towards a welcoming, compassionate and just solution to the needs of those seeking asylum among us.

1 Baptcare

- 1.1 Affirms the right of all people to:
 - a) live in dignity and peace in their homeland.
 - b) seek asylum and claim refugee status owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.
- 1.2. Actively seeks to depoliticise the issue of people seeking asylum in community debate and frame it as a humanitarian issue.
- 1.3. Calls on all Australians to oppose xenophobia and discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture and religion.
- 1.4. Is committed to encouraging Australian Baptist churches, groups, families and individuals to consider how they may further:
 - promote quality teaching and learning on immigration and refugees;
 - act as advocates for people seeking asylum, refugees and migrants;
 - oppose offshore detention of people seeking asylum and refugees;
 - oppose mandatory detention of people seeking asylum and refugees;
 - develop ministries of welcoming, reconciliation and social integration;
 - extend hospitality through intentional friendships and relationships;
 - freely share resources with those in need.

2 Federal Government

Baptcare calls on the Australian Government to:

- 2.1 Retain Australia's commitment to and abide by the principles in the international conventions to which Australia is a signatory when forming immigration and people seeking asylum policy – including the UN Refugee Convention and the Convention of the Rights of the Child. We call on immigration and asylum seeking policy to be recognised as fundamentally a humanitarian refugee issue rather than of border security or defence.
- 2.2 Pursue policies that seek to strengthen regional cooperation and expand protection of people seeking asylum and refugees in the region.
- 2.3 Abolish the practice of mandatory detention while asylum claims are being processed and provide community-based processing as a humanitarian alternative.
- 2.4 Cease offshore processing and provide onshore processing of the applications of all people seeking asylum who arrive in Australian territory, including territorial waters, irrespective of their mode of arrival. Cease the practice of sending people seeking asylum to third countries and of involuntary return to countries of origin when there is ongoing fear of persecution (refoulement).

- 2.5 Place children seeking asylum and their families, and unaccompanied minors, in appropriate community care while their claims for refugee status are assessed.
- 2.6 Provide transparent and timely processing of refugee claims, eligibility for permanent residency and access to the Refugee Review Tribunal for all people seeking asylum regardless of mode of arrival.
- 2.7 Implement the Houston Report's recommendation to increase Australia's humanitarian intake from 13,000 to 20,000 places a year, and up to 27,000 within five years.
- 2.8 Recognise that family support helps people to settle successfully in Australia and so increase the number of humanitarian places available for family reunion and make these open to all new Australians judged to be genuine refugees, regardless of mode of arrival.
- 2.9 Promote the opportunity for people seeking asylum to become productive contributing members of the Australian community by providing all with access to English-language classes, education and training opportunities, Centrelink support and Medicare, and the right to work – regardless of mode of arrival.

3 State and Territory Governments

- 3.1 Baptcare affirms the importance of state government programs that support the physical and mental health needs of people seeking asylum and refugees, particularly those who have suffered torture and trauma; and urges their continuation regardless of budgetary pressures.
- 3.2. Concerned about the level of housing and utilities stress that typically affects people seeking asylum in private rental, Baptcare urges state governments to work with the community services and social housing sectors to provide subsidies and concessions that will help to alleviate hardship.
- 3.3. Baptcare affirms the importance of support for children and young people seeking asylum within the school system and also calls for additional assistance to be provided to assist young people seeking asylum to access and succeed within the TAFE system and other employment training programs.

Baptcare works for safety, opportunity and a fair go for people seeking asylum. Our commitment is to see all people experiencing fullness of life, regardless of culture, belief, and circumstance. Our vision for communities where every person is cherished sees us working to uphold the dignity and rights of people seeking asylum, and the creation of environments where all people can thrive.



4 Local Government

Baptcare calls on local government authorities across Australia to declare their municipalities Refugee Welcome Zones and to institute programs that promote social inclusion for people seeking asylum and refugees in their areas.

5 All levels of government

We call on all Australian politicians to demonstrate their moral convictions and to exercise ethical and non-partisan leadership in political and policy debates on immigration and refugee policy.

Support Sanctuary

- **Donate.**
Money, household items, food vouchers.
- **Employ.**
Sanctuary residents who are allowed to work are keen to find opportunities.
- **Educate.**
Invite us to speak to your community group, show a film, talk to friends.
- **Volunteer.**
Your time, skills and energy can make a difference.

To get involved contact us:
sanctuary@baptcare.org.au