

MEDIA RELEASE – JUNE 20, 2022

CAPSA celebrates World Refugee Day and continues to advocate for fair and humane treatment for all people seeking asylum

The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA) joins communities across Australia to celebrate Refugee Week and today mark World Refugee Day.

CAPSA, co-convened by Jesuit Social Services and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Australia, supports individuals, schools, parishes and Catholic organisations across education, health, refugee and social services in their advocacy for fair and humane treatment for people seeking asylum in Australia.

First marked on this day in 2001 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, World Refugee Day provides an opportunity to reflect on the experiences and contributions of refugees and people seeking asylum.

Co-Chairs of CAPSA Julie Edwards, CEO of Jesuit Social Services, and Tamara Domicelj, Country Director of Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Australia emphasise the importance of taking the time to come together to honour this community.

“Today provides an opportunity for us to reflect upon, celebrate and amplify the voices of refugees and people seeking asylum, and to honour their many ongoing contributions to our communities, both here in Australia and around the world,” said Ms Domicelj.

“The theme of Refugee Week in Australia this year is healing, and as Pope Francis noted, our shared response must be to continue “to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate” refugees and people seeking asylum who search for safety in Australia and around the world. It is surely what the call of Jesus to “love your neighbour” demands,” reflects Ms Edwards.

Ms Edwards and Ms Domicelj acknowledge that reforming Australia’s current immigration system of temporary protection and indefinite detention will take a significant amount of time and resources, as will the associated healing for those who have been impacted by these policies.

In light of this, the co-Chairs welcome the new Government’s return of the Nadesalingam family to their home in Biloela over a week ago, and call upon the Government to expedite the resolution of their immigration status, along with that of so many others in a similar position.

“The incoming Federal Government has swiftly facilitated the welcomed return of the Nadesalingam family to the central Queensland town of Biloela. They have suffered too much, as have so many other people seeking asylum and refugees under Australia’s harsh policy settings. We urge the Government to ensure that all people’s claims for protection are processed fairly, humanely and expeditiously and that all recognised refugees are afforded pathways to permanency and access to family reunification at the earliest opportunity,” emphasised Ms Domicelj.

CAPSA will continue to advocate that the Federal Government fulfil its election promise of abolishing Temporary Protection Visas and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas and providing pathways to permanency for all affected people.

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