

2026-27 Pre-Budget Submission

Introduction

Founded in 2001, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) is Australia's largest independent aid and advocacy organisation for people seeking asylum and refugees, supporting and empowering people at the most critical junctures of their journey.

The ASRC's 2026-2027 budget priorities are informed by consultation with refugees and our employment, education, legal programs and frontline support services, working with tens of thousands of people seeking asylum and refugees over two decades.

Summary of Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Increase the annual Humanitarian Intake to 50,000 places per year, and an additional 10,000 places through community sponsor programs and complementary pathways. Lift the ban on resettling refugees from Indonesia.

Recommendation 2: Provide family reunion mechanisms to allow dependent family members (including 'aged out' children) to come to Australia.

Recommendation 3: Provide additional and adequate humanitarian intakes when global humanitarian emergencies emerge in a consistent, fair, and humane manner.

Recommendation 4: Provide ongoing work rights for people seeking asylum on bridging visas for the duration of their protection visa application process, including merits review, judicial review, and ministerial intervention stages. Support streamlined qualification recognition.

Recommendation 5: Provide ongoing study rights for people seeking asylum on bridging visas for the duration of their protection visa application process, including merits review and judicial review stages. Ensure people seeking asylum on bridging visas are eligible for government-funded study support, including subsidised VET courses, funded apprenticeships, and traineeships.

Recommendation 6: Provide people seeking asylum access to mainstream social support services, including Centrelink payments such as the Special Benefit, NDIS and Medicare for the duration of their protection visa application process, including merits review, judicial review, and ministerial intervention stages.

Recommendation 7: Reduce the administrative burden on the Department of Home Affairs and provide long overdue certainty and safety to 'transitory people' already living in the Australian community, by transitioning them to permanent residency.

Recommendation 8: Fund the immediate evacuation of people held offshore on Nauru & in Papua New Guinea (PNG), including family members, to safety in Australia, and provide them with the necessary support and a clear and swift pathway to permanency for those who do not

have resettlement options.

Recommendation 9: End the policy of sending people seeking asylum by sea to offshore detention, and process applications for protection in the Australian community. People found to be refugees should be permanently and swiftly resettled.

Recommendation 10: End the Albanese Government's new agreement with Nauru to provide the NZYQ cohort with 30 year visas and deport them from Australia with no access to natural justice.

Recommendation 11: Commit to ending Australia's immigration detention regime and invest in community-based alternatives.

Recommendation 12: Develop and fund the implementation of a federal Human Rights Act for Australia.

Recommendation 13: Commit to funding and implementing the Human Rights Commission's National Anti-Racism Framework, and a National Anti-Racism Taskforce to oversee it.

Increase Australia's humanitarian intake

Increase Humanitarian Intake

The Labor Party won the election with the promise to increase Australia's humanitarian intake to 27,000 places annually.¹ However, this commitment has not been fulfilled, and since 2023, intake has remained at 20,000 places.

Increasing humanitarian intake provides key economic benefits to Australia.² Refugees bring significant skills and are **twice as likely to start businesses** compared to the broader population.

Australia's humanitarian intake is an inadequate response to the over 123 million people displaced globally.³ The US' suspension of humanitarian visas and cuts to foreign aid have also created **unprecedented demand** for places under the humanitarian program.⁴ An increase to 50,000 humanitarian places is aligned with other like-minded countries such as Canada, which resettled more than 51,000 refugees in 2023.⁵

Recommendation 1: Increase the annual Humanitarian Intake to 50,000 places per year, and an additional 10,000 places through community sponsor programs and complementary pathways. Lift the ban on resettling refugees from Indonesia.

Family reunification

Increasing the number of places for family reunification is a key investment in the wellbeing of

¹ ALP, 2023, p. 138. <https://www.alp.org.au/about/national-platform>

² Billion Dollar Benefit. <https://www.billiondollarbenefit.org.au/>

³ UNHCR, <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends>

⁴ Department, 2025, p 3,

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/PDFs/2025-26-humanitarian-program-discussion-paper.pdf>

⁵ Refugee Council of Australia, 2023, <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/refugees-protected-in-australia-2023/>

refugees who have made Australia their home. This increase would have a negligible budget impact, as limited settlement services are required for those who arrive through family reunification visas and community and family support reduces the need to access mainstream social services. The ALP National Platform agrees that “family reunion for migrants and refugees is important to successful settlement”.⁶

Ensuring refugees are reunited with their families will improve their capacity to engage in resettlement and rebuild their lives. The Department of Home Affairs must also commit more resources to urgently resolve the backlog of Partner and Child visa applications pending for more than two years. This would minimise the amount of time people spend separated from their loved ones, which is shown to have significant negative impacts on the resettlement and mental health of refugees.⁷

Many refugees are unable to reunite with their families due to restrictive visa conditions and fees, delays and complex procedures,⁸ and narrow definitions of ‘family’ that determine visa eligibility.⁹ People who were placed on temporary protection visas for over a decade were unable to sponsor any family members. Now that many are being converted to permanent Resolution of Status visas, they can sponsor family members. However, many of their children have ‘aged out’ of the ability to be sponsored by their parents in Australia, according to the Migration Regulations requirements for a Child (subclass 101) visa. **It is almost impossible for children over 18 to reunite with their parents in Australia.**

The Minister for Home Affairs can amend the Migration Regulations 1994 (Cth) to remove the age criteria, ensuring children do not ‘age out’ from eligibility and become permanently separated from their families. Children who enter Australia through family reunification visas **would not require the same funding for refugee resettlement services as those entering on humanitarian visas.** This would also **reduce the burden on the humanitarian program** as applications for immediate family members (partners, dependent children) would be managed through the family stream.

Recommendation 2: Provide family reunion mechanisms to allow dependent family members (including ‘aged out’ children) to come to Australia.

Emergency visa framework

Additional funding is required to establish an emergency visa framework that adequately responds to humanitarian crises. Australia’s current approach to humanitarian crises is inconsistent, ineffective, and fails to fulfil our humanitarian responsibility as a signatory to the *Refugee Convention 1951*. **The ALP has committed to “a humanitarian migration program that reasonably responds to international humanitarian crises as they arise”.**¹⁰

⁶ ALP, 2023, p. 134. <https://www.alp.org.au/about/national-platform>

⁷ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Lives on Hold: Refugees and asylum seekers in the ‘Legacy Caseload’*, 2019, https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/ahrc_lives_on_hold_2019.pdf.

⁸ Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, 2022-2025 Budget Priorities, p. 6.

⁹ Narrow definitions of ‘family unit’ and ‘immediate family’ in the Migration Regulations exclude some people from the split family provisions of the Special Humanitarian Program, and prevent some families from applying for protection visas as a family unit (including where children turn 18 while waiting for a protection application to be processed). See Migration Regulations 1994 (Cth), reg 1.12 and 1.12AA.

¹⁰ ALP, 2023, p. 138. <https://www.alp.org.au/about/national-platform>

To respond to humanitarian crises fairly and humanely, an emergency protection framework should be established.¹¹ As recommended by the Kaldor Centre, the Australian government should establish an “overarching decision-making framework” that encompasses both physical protection, such as evacuating people, and legal protection. This would provide the government with a ready-made plan and enable it to deliver an efficient emergency response, rather than arbitrary and hastily created policies dependent on the politics of the day.¹²

Furthermore, additional humanitarian intake must adequately respond to demand. Australia did not address the scale of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, granting only 19,787 offshore humanitarian visas between 2021-24, approximately 7% of those who applied.¹³ Other countries, such as Canada, granted an additional 40,000 humanitarian visas for people from Afghanistan.¹⁴

Recommendation 3: Provide additional and adequate humanitarian intakes when global humanitarian emergencies emerge in a consistent, fair, and humane manner.

Provide ongoing work and study rights for people seeking asylum during the refugee status determination process

Right to work

Whilst people seeking asylum await the outcome of their protection visa, they are placed on bridging visas, some of which have a ‘no work’ and / or ‘no study’ condition applied. There are currently thousands of people seeking asylum in Australia ready and willing to work; however are unable to due to visa restrictions. As of August 2025, there were 9,236 people seeking asylum who arrived by boat and had a bridging visa E with a ‘no work’ condition applied, and 8,628 others holding a bridging visa E with a ‘no work’ condition applied.¹⁵ This is a total of 17,864 people. This is not inclusive of others on different bridging visa types, so it is estimated that the number is higher.

These ‘no work’ conditions waste the significant economic potential that people seeking asylum have to contribute to Australia. In 2024-25, **over 77% of people with work rights who accessed assistance through ASRC’s employment program gained employment in one of the most in-need industries**, such as construction and healthcare.¹⁶

Research shows that utilising the skills of migrant workers would generate an **additional \$70 billion in economic activity** over 10 years.¹⁷ Currently, Australia loses **\$1.25 billion in lost wages** over five years from the underutilisation of skilled migrants.

¹¹ Kaldor Centre, 2024,

<https://www.unsw.edu.au/content/dam/pdfs/law/kaldor/2024-09-policy-brief-15-emergency-protection.pdf>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The Lowy Institute, <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/where-did-afghan-refugees-go-where-next>

¹⁵ Senate Estimates Questions on Notice, SE25-0451 - Onshore asylum - People on Bridging visas, Supplementary Estimates October 2025.

¹⁶ Monthly Update: Onshore Protection (Subclass 866) Visa Processing - November 2025,

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-stats/files/monthly-update-onshore-protection-866-visa-processing-nov-2025.PDF>

¹⁷ Billion Dollar Benefit. <https://www.billiondollarbenefit.org.au/>

Allowing people seeking asylum to work would reduce costs for charities that should be using their funds for the most vulnerable. Many people seeking asylum are able to work but are prevented from doing so due to visa restrictions, which forces them into reliance on charities.

Case study

Sadik arrived in Australia from Iran in 2013 and applied for refugee protection. A qualified plumber with years of experience, he was eager to work and contribute. Instead, he spent years on a bridging visa without work rights, unable to earn an income or continue his trade. When he finally gained work rights, Sadik enrolled in a plumbing apprenticeship, determined to have his skills recognised. But soon after, his work rights were revoked, and he was forced to withdraw.

Eventually, Sadik regained work rights, completed Recognition of Prior Learning, and secured his Australian plumbing registration. Today, he owns and operates a successful plumbing business - an example of the potential unlocked when barriers are removed.

In addition to the right to work, removing barriers to qualification recognition and implementing one national governance system to manage this would make a huge impact on the ability of people seeking asylum to contribute meaningfully to Australia's economy.¹⁸

Recommendation 4: Provide ongoing work rights for people seeking asylum on bridging visas for the duration of their protection visa application process, including merits review, judicial review, and ministerial intervention stages. Support streamlined qualification recognition.

Right to study

Government policies prohibit or make it financially infeasible for people seeking asylum to study at university. People seeking asylum are also excluded from accessing subsidised TAFE courses, apprenticeships, training, and certification programs. This is despite the **clear benefit this would provide Australia's economy**.

Of the people with study rights that ASRC supported to enrol in education courses in 2024-25, the top three industries were aging and disability, healthcare, and early childhood education - all of which are experiencing skills shortages.

Many who do have the right to study are unable to do so because people seeking asylum must pay international student fees, which are **400% more than domestic student fees**.

Allowing people seeking asylum to study affordably at domestic student rates and access subsidised vocational training courses would also allow the government to **plan for future skills shortages**. The most in-demand industries in the future are projected to be healthcare, construction and education.¹⁹ By allowing people seeking asylum to study and train in these and other industries, the Australian Government would pre-emptively address skills shortages.

¹⁸ Activate Australia's Skills, <https://activateaustralia.org.au/>

¹⁹ Victoria University, <https://www.vu.edu.au/about-vu/news-events/vu-blog/10-in-demand-careers-for-the-future>

Recommendation 5: Provide ongoing study rights for people seeking asylum on bridging visas for the duration of their protection visa application process, including merits review and judicial review stages. Ensure people seeking asylum on bridging visas are eligible for government-funded study support, including subsidised VET courses, funded apprenticeships, and traineeships.

Ensure universal safety and mainstream social support for all refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia

Whilst people seeking asylum await the outcome of their protection visa, which can take over a decade, federal government policies prevent them from accessing mainstream social supports, including Centrelink, Medicare, NDIS, income or housing assistance, subsidised childcare or aged care. Allowing people seeking asylum to access these mainstream supports would reduce the strain on already overburdened crisis support services and hospital emergency departments.

While there is a minimal payment available for people seeking asylum from the 'Status Resolution Support Program' delivered via Home Affairs, the funding to this program has been reduced over time and only 7% of people seeking asylum are currently able to access it due to extremely restrictive eligibility criteria.²⁰ Even for those who are eligible, the payment is lower than Centrelink, and forces people to live below the poverty line.

Without access to Medicare, people seeking asylum have no choice but to turn to emergency services, and leave minor illnesses that need access to primary care until they have deteriorated to the point they need emergency care. While many State Governments provide free access to hospital services for people seeking asylum, this places an unnecessary additional burden on their budgets to fund federal government responsibilities. States like Victoria are already experiencing severe strain on their healthcare systems without this additional responsibility.²¹

People seeking asylum on bridging visas are also not eligible for NDIS, aged care services, or federally funded mental health support and family violence intervention services. This **forces many to rely on limited state-funded services or community organisations**. Without essential disability support services, people seeking asylum are further disadvantaged, prevented from social participation and present more frequently with emergencies and crises.

As people seeking asylum are forced into destitution, many are forced to turn to crisis support services to avoid homelessness. **In 2024-25, the ASRC provided over 20,000 nights of shelter for people seeking asylum, which was significantly less than the demand for housing support.** Without work rights or access to Centrelink, people seeking asylum are reliant on crisis housing organisations, which are already struggling to meet demand.

People seeking asylum on bridging visas are excluded from the Federal Government's Child Care Subsidy.²² This means access to childcare is extremely cost-prohibitive, and as a result, **many people seeking asylum cannot work even when they have work rights on their visa.**

²⁰ Department of Home Affairs, 2025.

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-stats/files/monthly-update-onshore-protection-866-visa-processing-june-2025.pdf>

²¹ ABC, 2024,

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-12-19/the-strain-on-victoria-s-health-system-is-greater-than-ever/104748566>

²² Services Australia, <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/residence-rules-for-child-care-subsidy?contextot=41186>

Recommendation 6: Provide people seeking asylum access to mainstream social support services, including Centrelink payments such as the Special Benefit, NDIS and Medicare for the duration of their protection visa application process, including merits review, judicial review, and ministerial intervention stages.

Urgently resource the process of converting all remaining transitory people in Australia to permanent residency

Around 800 'transitory persons' remain in Australia on short-term bridging visas after being transferred here for medical treatment from offshore detention, many of whom have lived in the community for five years or more. These individuals and families have already endured prolonged detention, severe trauma and, in many cases, life-threatening medical and mental health crises. During 2018, the mental health of children in offshore processing in Nauru deteriorated significantly, with many evacuated for emergency medical and mental health treatment.

The families of these children, along with single adults who survived offshore detention, have worked hard to rebuild their lives, creating stability for their children and contributing to and becoming an integral part of their communities in Australia, despite years of imposed trauma and ongoing uncertainty.

Many of those remaining in Australia have been unable to take up resettlement options to New Zealand or the United States because they have Australian family members - including Australian spouses, Australian citizen children, and extended families from whom third country resettlement would permanently separate them. Others were unable to relocate to third countries because of the fragile mental health of their children, who need stability, connection and certainty to recover from the harm they experienced in offshore detention.

It is clear that the families in these circumstances will never be in a position to resettle to a third country, and even if they could - the Government has been unable to secure further resettlement agreements. Given the political contexts in New Zealand and the United States, it is not realistic to expect that these agreements will be renewed. Global refugee resettlement pathways are in crisis with the withdrawal of the United States from its previous refugee resettlement commitments. Given there are 42.5 million refugees worldwide, it is extremely unlikely, if not impossible, that other nations will agree to take up resettlement of refugees already safely living in Australia. Continued policy reliance on third-country resettlement to provide a future for this group is therefore neither credible nor responsible.

The ongoing management of transitory persons imposes a persistent and unnecessary administrative burden on the Department of Home Affairs, with short-term bridging visas requiring repeated renewals every six months. Rather than maintaining this cycle of inefficiency, the remaining cohort of approximately 800 people could be transitioned to permanent residency using existing departmental processes, and with the intervention of the Minister for Home Affairs.

Given the small size of this cohort and the many years they have already spent living in the Australian community, such a transition would have a negligible impact on the federal budget, including in relation to social security and service entitlements, while delivering significant administrative savings and the long-term certainty and security these families need.

Recommendation 7: Reduce the administrative burden on the Department of Home Affairs and provide long overdue certainty and safety to 'transitory people' already living in the Australian community, by transitioning them to permanent residency.

Fund the immediate evacuation of individuals and families in Nauru and Papua New Guinea to Australia

Offshore processing is one of the most expensive policies in the Australian Federal Budget. With \$581 million allocated for 2025-26 financial year and forward estimates of an additional \$985 million allocated to 2029.²³ This is a total of \$1.5 billion over the next four years. Since the commencement of the Labor Government, the following funds have been allocated for 'offshore management':

- \$482 million in the 2022-23 financial year²⁴
- \$486 million in the 2023-24 financial year²⁵
- \$604 million in the 2024-25 financial year²⁶

Since the commencement of the offshore processing policy in 2013, it has cost the Australian taxpayer more than \$13 billion. Since the Labor government commenced, this is a **total spend to date of over \$2.1 billion** (these are not actuals), and when taken together with the projected costs, a total allocation of over \$3.6 billion - estimating that the population is likely to remain stable at about 100, this is **a cost of \$12 million per person per year**.

To put these numbers into perspective, **this is more than double the \$793 million allocated in the 2025–26 Budget to fix critical gaps in women's healthcare**, including access to contraception, bulk billing for reproductive health, specialist endometriosis and pelvic pain clinics, and medical care during menopause.²⁷

Beyond its extraordinary cost, offshore processing presents an acute and ongoing risk of corruption, financial mismanagement and loss of public funds. A recently leaked AUSTRAC report provided evidence that the Australian Government has received intelligence warnings about suspected corruption and suspicious financial activity involving senior Nauruan officials.

Prior to this, whistleblowers have spoken out about their concerns about corruption and financial mismanagement, including allegations that millions of dollars in taxpayer funds were paid through

²³ Portfolio Budget Statement Department of Home Affairs 2025-26, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/Budgets/2025-26-home-affairs-pbs-department-of-home-affairs.pdf>, p. 38

²⁴ Portfolio Budget Statement Department of Home Affairs 2022-23, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/budgets/2022-23-home-affairs-pbs-full.pdf>, p. 41

²⁵ Portfolio Budget Statement Department of Home Affairs 2022-23, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/Budgets/2023-24-home-affairs-portfolio-pbs-full.pdf>, p.39

²⁶ Portfolio Budget Statement Department of Home Affairs 2024-25, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/Budgets/2024-25-home-affairs-pbs-full-version.pdf>, p. 42

²⁷ Women's Budget Statement 2025-26, <https://budget.gov.au/content/womens-statement/download/womens-budget-statement-2025-26.pdf>, pp. 3-4

contracts for services no longer required or delivered²⁸, and that companies linked to bikie gangs and corrupt officials were contracted under Australia's offshore arrangements²⁹.

It is clear that the Albanese Government was aware of these integrity concerns when they entered into a new agreement with President David Adeang to deport the 'NZYQ cohort' to Nauru. This new deal will come at a cost to the taxpayer of at least \$2.5 billion dollars and up to \$7 billion to provide individuals deported from Australia with 30 year visas. The Australian government has sought to avoid transparency about the terms of the agreement.

The human cost of offshore detention is severe, well-documented and ongoing. For more than a decade, people detained offshore have been subjected to preventable medical neglect, sexual assault, prolonged isolation and extreme psychological harm, with children driven to self-harm and suicide attempts and lives lost through neglect and despair.

Considering that **the cost of onshore community processing was around \$10,221 per person per year in 2019**³⁰, there can be no justification of the cost of offshore detention to the taxpayer, the integrity risk to public money, and the harm caused to people detained.

Recommendation 8: Fund the immediate evacuation of people held offshore on Nauru & in Papua New Guinea (PNG), including family members, to safety in Australia, and provide them with the necessary support and a clear and swift pathway to permanency for those who do not have resettlement options.

Recommendation 9: End the policy of sending people seeking asylum by sea to offshore detention, and process applications for protection in the Australian community. People found to be refugees should be permanently and swiftly resettled.

Recommendation 10: End the Albanese Government's new agreement with Nauru to provide the NZYQ cohort with 30 year visas and deport them from Australia with no access to natural justice.

Commit to ending Australia's immigration detention regime

The cost of Australia's onshore immigration detention regime places a significant burden on the federal budget. In late 2024, the Government awarded a new contract to Secure Journeys, a subsidiary of the US-based Management and Training Corporation (MTC), to operate Australia's onshore immigration detention network. The contract is **valued at \$2.3 billion over five years**, commencing in early 2025.³¹

²⁸ 'Pouring Money into a Trough: Senior public servant blows whistle on allegedly corrupt millions', <https://www.smh.com.au/national/pouring-money-into-a-trough-senior-public-servant-blows-whistle-on-allegedly-corrupt-millions-20251107-p5n8o0.html>

²⁹ 'Mind boggling: whistleblower reveals how global bikie boss won Nauru security deal', <https://www.smh.com.au/national/mind-boggling-whistleblower-reveals-how-global-bikie-boss-won-nauru-security-deal-20251105-p5n7yz.html>

³⁰ At what cost? The human and economic cost of Australia's offshore detention policies, <https://www.equityeconomics.com.au/report-archive/at-what-cost>

³¹ Labor to pay \$2.3bn to controversial US prison operator subsidiary to run onshore detention, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/dec/11/secure-journeys-onshore-detention-operator-us-prisons-albanese-government-ntwnfb>

As of December 2025, there were 1036 people in immigration detention centres and 'alternative places of detention' (APODs). Assuming the number of people detained was relatively stable at around 1000 people across the year, this represents **a total cost of around \$460,000 per person for the year**, or \$1260 per day.

This is an extraordinary cost given the Institute of Public Affairs estimated in 2024 that the cost of incarcerating a person in the **criminal justice system** in Australia is around \$422 per prisoner per day, or **\$153,895 per year**³² - **less than half the cost of immigration detention**.

Immigration detention also causes **serious and lasting harm to physical and mental health**. Extensive medical evidence shows that detention is associated with high rates of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, self-harm and suicidality, with the severity of harm increasing the longer a person is detained. Detainees also experience deterioration in chronic health conditions, delayed diagnosis and treatment, and **poorer long-term health outcomes** due to disrupted care and prolonged stress.³³

As noted in the section on offshore detention above, the **cost of community based arrangements** is significantly less, at around **\$10,221 per person per year** in 2019³⁴.

Given the extraordinary cost of onshore immigration detention, its well-documented harm, and the availability of far cheaper and more effective community-based alternatives, continued investment in detention cannot be justified on economic, health or policy grounds.

Recommendation 11: Commit to ending Australia's immigration detention regime and invest in community-based alternatives.

Support a Federal Human Rights Act

The absence of a national Human Rights Act has had extremely harmful consequences for people seeking asylum in Australia. For more than a decade, successive governments have implemented policies that resulted in prolonged detention, preventable medical neglect, family separation and serious health and mental health harm to children and adults. This has only been possible because Australia does not have a Human Rights Act that requires decision-makers to consider and act in line with basic universal human rights. Instead, the most vulnerable groups in Australia are repeatedly harmed for political gain, and there are no safeguards in place.

The Government should develop and fund the implementation of a Human Rights Act for Australia to ensure that fundamental rights apply to all people, without exception. Consistent with the recommendations contained in the pre-budget submission of the Human Rights Act campaign, this must include resourcing for implementation across government, embedding human rights safeguards into budget and policy development processes, and scrutiny of appropriation decisions that impact people's rights. A Human Rights Act would provide essential protections against future rights violations for everyone in Australia.

³² The Cost Of Australia's Prisons In 2024, <https://ipa.org.au/read/the-cost-of-australias-prisons-in-2024?>

³³ Sherif B, Hocking DC, Rees S, Affaticati LM, Sundram S. A systematic review of qualitative research on the physical and mental health impacts of immigration detention on asylum seekers and refugees, Oct 2025, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/41160526/>

³⁴ At what cost? The human and economic cost of Australia's offshore detention policies, <https://www.equityeconomics.com.au/report-archive/at-what-cost>

Recommendation 12: Develop and fund the implementation of a federal Human Rights Act for Australia.

Fund the Human Rights Commission's National Anti-Racism Framework

In the wake of the Bondi terrorist attack, it is clear that social division and racial hatred remain real and present risks in Australia. Racism continues to be deeply embedded across parts of our community, and those motivated by hatred on the basis of race, religion or nationality remain emboldened to cause harm.

At the request of the Albanese government, the Australian Human Rights Commission has developed a comprehensive national roadmap to address racism across all sectors of society. It provides 63 recommendations for a deep, whole of society approach to tackling racism in all public spaces across the country, including justice, health, education, workplaces, media and the arts.³⁵

We support the Human Rights Commission's calls for the Albanese government to commit to implementing the Framework and to fully fund a National Anti-Racism Taskforce to oversee its delivery.

The systemic causes of racism and racist violence cannot be addressed through criminal justice responses alone, which intervene only after harm has occurred. Preventing violence and discrimination requires sustained investment in education, accountability and community-led solutions that address racism at its roots, instead of just punishing the symptoms.

Recommendation 13: Commit to funding and implementing the Human Rights Commission's National Anti-Racism Framework, and a National Anti-Racism Taskforce to oversee it.

³⁵ Australian Human Rights Commission, National Anti-Racism Framework, <https://humanrights.gov.au/resource-hub/by-resource-type/reports/race/anti-racism-framework>