

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

14 August 2026

Dear Prime Minister,

We write as community and not-for-profit organisations, multicultural and migrant community leaders from across Australia to urge your Government not to proceed with reported changes that would take away work rights from people seeking asylum, reduce appeal rights and make it harder for migrant and refugee families to stay together.

At a time when multiculturalism and migrant communities are facing growing attacks and scapegoating, Australia needs leadership that brings people together, upholds fairness and ensures our policies do not further harm communities already being targeted.

This is not the Australia we want to be and it is not the answer to the growing challenges facing our community.

We are deeply concerned the proposed changes would have profound and foreseeable consequences for thousands of people who are already part of our communities and who are currently working to support themselves and their families.

Removing work rights would strip people of their income and their independence, leaving them unable to pay rent, buy food or meet their most basic needs.

If this happens, the consequences will fall directly on us – already overstretched charities and communities will be left to keep people fed and housed.

We implore you not to put us in the position of needing to meet the needs of people who are willing, capable and keen to work, and who are doing so right now.

Removing the right to work would also push people towards cash-in-hand employment and make them more vulnerable to wage theft, unsafe working conditions, exploitation and abuse. This is fundamentally at odds with Labor's values.

We recognise that Australia's protection system is facing serious backlogs. Those delays undermine confidence in the system and cause real harm and distress to people who can spend years living with uncertainty, waiting for a final decision. We all have an interest in a protection system that is fast, fair and effective.

However, the solution to lengthy processing times is to improve the speed and quality of decision-making, not to push people into complete poverty while they wait.

We urge you to wind back any planned punitive measures, and to protect the integrity of the protection system by implementing the following measures:

- a) Invest in timely, high-quality decision-making at the Department of Home Affairs to make sure applications are properly assessed at the start;
- b) Fund access to free and independent legal assistance to ensure people are able to explain their circumstances effectively at the initial and merits stages;
- c) Ensure that the Administrative Review Tribunal and the Federal Circuit and Family Court are adequately resourced to decide matters without unnecessary delay; and
- d) People seeking asylum should be able to work, support their families, and have a fair chance to make their case.

Taking these rights away won't fix problems with the protection system. It will push people into poverty and exploitation, while weakening safeguards designed to prevent people being returned to danger.

This is a choice about the kind of country we want to be. We urge you to choose a fairer and more effective path.

Sincerely,

3CR Community Radio

ACOSS (Australian Council of Social Service)

Act for Peace

African Women's and Families Network

Altona Meadows Community Centre Inc

Amnesty International Australia - Bendigo
Action Group

Amnesty International Australia Pennant
Hills Activist Group

Anglicare Australia

Anti-Slavery Australia

Apollo Bay RAR

ARAN

Arise Foundation

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)

Asylum Seekers Centre

Australia Refugees and Family Reunification
Inc.

Australian Arab Institute for Culture and Ideas

Australian Bhutanese Society of Northern Tasmania Inc. (ABSNT)

Australian Burmese women group

Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce (ACRT)

Australian Council of Social Service

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights

Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights

Ballarat Rural Australians for Refugees.

Banksia Gardens Community Services

Barwon Community Legal Service

Bayside Refugee Advocacy and Support Organisation

Bennelong Friends of Refugees

Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project

Cambodian Association of Victoria

Canberra Refugee Support Inc

Capel Sound Community Group

Carina Ford Immigration Lawyers

Casey Cardinia for Refugees

CatholicCare Victoria

Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees (CARAD)

Circle of Friends Australia

Combined Refugee Action Group

Common Grace

Community Migrant Resource Centre

Compassionate Hands Inc

Country Women's Association in Tasmania Inc.

Democracy in Colour

End Child Detention Coalition Australia Ltd

Fair Go Community Alliance Australia Inc.

Farnham Street Neighbourhood Learning Centre

Farrell Rose Migration Lawyers Pty Ltd

Federation of Community Legal Centres

Fremantle Friday Refugee Vigil Group

Fremantle Refugee Rights Action Network
GetUp

Grandmothers for Refugees (Macnamara)

Grandmothers for Refugees Bendigo

Grandmothers For Refugees Chisholm

Grandmothers for Refugees Curtin

Grandmothers for Refugees Fremantle

Grandmothers for Refugees Newcastle & Lake Macquarie

Greenslopes Reconciliation Action Group

H3 Alliance

Hamilton Area Rural Australians for Refugees

HASA (Hunter Asylum Seeker Advocacy)

Hazara Community Geelong

Hazara Cultural Association

HIV/AIDS Legal Centre

House of Welcome/St Francis Social Services
Human Rights Law Centre
Immigrant Women's Support Service
Immigration Advice and Rights Centre
InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
Iranian Women's Association
Jacaranda Community Centre
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Australia
Jesuit Social Services
Jews for Refugees
Justice and Equity Centre
Justice for Refugees SA
Kachin Association Victoria
Kensington Neighbourhood House
Kindra Migration Lawyers
Kommonground inc
Launceston Hazara Community
Liberty Victoria
Lismore Region Refugee Settlement
Love Makes A Way (Victoria)
Maleny Refugee Advocacy Group
Many Coloured Sky
Mercy Care
Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania
Migrant Talent Connector Inc.
Migrant Workers Centre

Multicultural Australia
Multicultural Council of Tasmania
Mums4refugees
National Amnesty Refugee Network
National Justice Project
Network West
North Melbourne Language and Learning Inc (NMLL)
Northern Community Legal Centre
Northsiders With Refugees
Older Women's Network NSW
Outlets Cooperative Neighbourhood House LIMITED
Parliament on King
Pax Christi
People Just Like Us
Professional Migrant Women's Network
Qessa Media
Queenscliff Rural Australians for Refugees
RAC Qld
Refugee Action Campaign Canberra
Refugee Action Collective
Refugee Advice & Casework Service (RACS)
Refugee Advocacy Network
Refugee and Immigration Legal Service
Refugee Council of Australia
Refugee Legal
Refugees Welcome / The Welcome Project

Religions for Peace (Tasmania Branch)	Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS)
River Nile School	Visa Cancellations Working Group
Rural Australians for Refugees Bendigo	WA Refugee and People Seeking Asylum Network
Rural Australians for Refugees Griffith	Walker Close Association Inc
Rural Australians for Refugees Southern Highlands	Welcome Merchant
Safe and Equal	Welcoming Australia
SCALES Community Legal Centre	Wesley Asylum Seeker Welcome Place
Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers Association	Westjustice (Western Community Legal Centre Ltd)
Shepparton Interfaith Network	Whittlesea Community Connections
Social Change Institute	Williamstown Community and Education Centre Inc
Social Responsibilities Committee, Anglican Church Southern Queensland	Women's Community Aid Association
South-East Monash Legal Service	Women's House Shelta
Southeast Multicultural Community Services	Women's Legal Service Victoria
SSI (Settlement Services International)	Women's Legal Services Australia
St Albans Community youth club	Women's Legal Services SA
SWAN Southern Women Action Network	World Wellness Group
Tasmanian Refugee Legal Service	Wyndham Community and Education Centre
Tassie Nannas	Yarraville Community Centre
Top End Women's Legal Service	
Trans Sisters United	
Uki Refugee Project	
United Hazara Association President	
United Muslim Sisters of Latrobe Valley	
United Nations Association of Australia Queensland division	
Victoria Hazara Philanthropic Association	