

Refugees

AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN REFUGEES IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Australian Democrats' immigration policy is based on non-discrimination and gives priority to refugees and family reunion.

This recognises the long-term social, cultural and economic benefits that family and humanitarian migration brings to Australia.

Our policies recognise the benefits that refugees bring to Australia and seek to prevent refugees from being punished simply for seeking protection from persecution.

The Democrats support the abolition of mandatory detention, which would prevent an enormous amount of trauma and suffering and also save the Australian community millions of dollars.

Changes made to the Migration Act by Liberal and Labor since 2001 have resulted in outsourcing the processing for refugees, with extra costs in the hundreds of millions of dollars. This enormous waste of funds has been spent solely to prevent asylum seekers from being able to access proper legal processes and to keep them away from public scrutiny.

Pacific solution

The Australian Democrats were the only political party to vote in the Senate against the legislation introducing the Pacific Solution.

The Pacific solution is unethical and in direct contravention of international law. It shifts the burden of managing asylum seekers onto some of our poorest neighbours and is an unnecessary waste of taxpayers' money.

The human cost is also intolerable. Thousands of people have been denied basic legal and human rights, kept separated from the families and suffered severe damage to their mental health as a direct result of this policy.

Mandatory Detention

The Australia Democrats oppose mandatory detention. Asylum seekers should remain in reception centres for no more than 4–8 weeks, to establish their bona fides and for health checks. Asylum seekers should be then issued bridging visas and released into the community with access to support including English classes. This would standardise the arrangements with those for asylum seekers who arrive on holiday or visitor visas and seek asylum whilst onshore.

Refugees

Temporary Protection Visas

The Australian Democrats also oppose Temporary Protection Visas. The introduction of TPVs directly led to a dramatic increase in the number of women and children making the perilous journey to Australia.

Although legally recognised as refugees, temporary visa holders are treated differently from other refugees and discriminated against solely because of their method of arrival. The Australian Democrats agree that this is in direct contravention of the UN Convention on Refugees.

45 Day Rule

The Australian Democrats are against the 45-day time limit on applying for a refugee visa. We join the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners in their concern about the impact of lack of access to Medicare, the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme and public hospitals.

Judicial Review

We believe that all refugees and asylum seekers should have access to the Australian legal system equal to that of any other person in Australia. The constant moves by the Government to further restrict access to the Courts have been and will continue to be opposed by the Australian Democrats.

Democrats Position

All Democrat Senators advocate strongly on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers and continue to visit individuals within detention centres. Senator Bartlett is the only politician to have visited Nauru three times as well as every detention centre in Australia.

The Democrats are opposed and will continue to oppose all legislation which the Government has introduced without proper consideration to repel asylum seekers on the high seas, and continue to work to put an end to the Pacific solution.

The Democrats believe Australia has a moral responsibility, as well as a duty under international law, to provide haven for refugees and not send people back to persecution or death.

The Australian Democrats will continue working to improve the quality of life for refugees and asylum seekers and to change attitudes both within parliament and within the Australian community.



CONTACT US

(03) 9416 1880

Lv 1, 62 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne VIC 3002

inquiries@democrats.org.au

Authorised by Jack Evans, 5 Poinciana Place, Wanneroo WA 6065
Printed by Senator Lyn Allison, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600