

## **Refugee Action Committee Canberra – Submission to Australia’s Humanitarian Program 2025-26**

### **Preface**

The Refugee Action Campaign Canberra (RAC Canberra) appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission on Australia’s Humanitarian Program 2025-26.

It is encouraging that the Australian government continues its commitment to Australia’s resettlement program. However, it is disappointing that, in the face of the global crisis of displacement, and the USA’s suspension of its refugee resettlement program, there has not been an increase in the number of resettlement places in the 2025-26 Australian Humanitarian Program.

### **An opportunity to support a key neighbour, Indonesia**

The 2025-26 Humanitarian Program specifically includes a focus on ‘supporting our neighbours within the Asia region’.

A very clear and practical way in which this objective can be realised is through Australia’s involvement in resolving the refugee crisis on our doorstep, that is, the more than 12,000 refugees languishing in Indonesia, some of who have been there for more than 12 years.

The majority of this group are from Afghanistan, with most being Hazara people (5158), and Rohingya people from Myanmar (2,686), both of whom are recognised by the Australian government as facing discrimination and persecution in their countries of origin.

Unlike Australia, Indonesia is not a signatory to the Refugee Convention. Refugees in Indonesia do not have work rights, children are not able to access education, and thousands live in poverty, without adequate healthcare. Many people have poor physical and mental health and there have been reports of suicides as a result of the years of limbo and forced family separation.

The situation of refugees in Indonesia is being significantly exacerbated by Australia’s continuing ban on the resettlement of refugees who registered with the UNHCR in Indonesia after 1 July 2014. The state of limbo and uncertainty for refugees in Indonesia is not only creating a humanitarian crisis, it is also a source of ongoing instability in our region.

The immediate removal of this resettlement restriction, and a specific inclusion in Australia’s Humanitarian Program 2025-26 of a humanitarian intake pathway for refugees in Indonesia will play a critical part in resolving the refugee crisis in that country and will lay the basis for Australia to continue working productively with our Asia Pacific neighbours on the issue of displacement and asylum in our region.

In light of the global displacement crisis, and the specific pressure this is imposing on one of our closest and most important neighbours, the Humanitarian Program 2025-26 is a key opportunity for Australia to strengthen our relationship with Indonesia and to deliver on a key objective in the Program.

**Recommendations:**

- RAC Canberra urges the Government to lift the ban on resettling refugees who registered with the UNHCR in Indonesia after 1 July 2014.
- RAC Canberra recommends creating an intake pathway and allocating a number of resettlement places in the 2025-26 Humanitarian Program for refugees who have been kept in limbo in Indonesia for more than a decade.

About the Refugee Action Campaign Canberra

The Refugee Action Campaign Canberra (RAC) is part of a network of concerned citizens around Australia seeking the fair and humane treatment of refugees in Australia. We are working to raise public awareness about the government's obligations to give refuge to asylum seekers and treat them with dignity and humanity. RAC is composed of individuals from a broad range of backgrounds and is not associated with any political party.

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