RAC Planning Meeting, 18.1.20 - summary notes

The annual planning meeting was held on Saturday 18 January with 42 people attending. A review of the political and campaign landscape was followed by report backs from each of the Working Groups. The following summary notes are from the discussion on RAC’s orientation for 2020 and suggested activities.

There was general agreement on broadening our focus to include other aspects of the situation facing people seeking asylum such as impacts of climate change, racism, while still focusing on the people remaining in Australia’s offshore detention regime in PNG and Nauru.

There was divergence of views on adopting the theme of resistance, as an anchor to reenergise existing activists and draw in new people. This theme was endorsed by way of a vote. Other points noted were (not exhaustive, by any means):

- Need to find a way to keep the focus on offshore detention as well as shaping a broader focus
- Suggestion to adopt a ‘rolling focus on particular issues’, for example, the situation of refugees and asylum seekers now in Port Moresby and those still imprisoned in the Bomana Immigration Centre; the recent acts by Border Force to further penalise people seeking asylum in regards to family reunion
- Work to engage more closely with sections of the community
- RAC needs to have things for existing and new activists to do - in order to increase visible presence and build pressure for change. We can’t just wait until the next election
- Build greater connection with other activist and mobilising movements
- Focus on increasing awareness of the cruelty that is happening

Suggested activities:

- Hold fund raising event/s for the Canadian resettlement initiative
- Continue training in ‘Breakthrough Conversations’ to equip people to have persuasive conversations regarding the issue
- Participate in picket at Jan 29 Press Club address by Scott Morrison
- Hold weekly vigil - invite passers-by to engage in conversation - utilise the briefings provided by Eileen for the letter writing network
- In online videos, focus on telling the truth, rather than on refuting government claims
• Submit an opinion piece to the Canberra Times in lead up to the Palm Sunday rally articulating the broad orientation of the local campaign

• Form a craftivism group to meet at the Museum of Australian Democracy and create visual material for use in the campaign, eg banners etc

• Coordinate messages across different platforms - web, media, social media, 'guerilla publicity units', letter writing, weekly vigils - to have a shared focus

• Focus on drawing more artists and activists into the campaign

• Encourage more people to get involved in assisting with completing the application forms for Canadian resettlement