

Bethos: Public Issues

RESOLUTION ON ASYLUM SEEKERS
Baptist Gathering 12-13 October 2012

In the light of the biblical mandate to care for the “stranger”; to support the oppressed and the Micah 6:8 challenge to act justly, mercifully and in humility; this Gathering of the Baptist Union of Victoria urges Baptist churches to

1. Promote teaching and learning on asylum seeker issues, drawing especially on
 - The experience of Baptist congregations with refugee membership
 - Baptcare’s expertise
 - The experience of churches who have provided resources for asylum seekers
 - Up-to-date information and links from the BUV website
2. Act as advocates for asylum seekers
3. Develop ministries of welcome and extend hospitality through intentional friendships and accommodation, drawing on
 - The experience of churches who have provided hospitality to asylum seekers
 - The ‘Welcome to My Place’ campaign
 - The Australian Homestay Network
4. Provide financial resources, especially through
 - Baptcare’s “Sanctuary” program that accommodates asylum seekers
 - The BUV’s “Refugee Assistance Loan Scheme (RALS)” for refugees and asylum seekers

Affirming the stated intention of the Federal Government to increase the annual quota of UNHCR-registered refugees, we call on the government to

1. Expand protection of asylum seekers and refugees in the region
2. Process claims for refugee status expeditiously
3. Pursue regional cooperation and burden sharing emphasising human rights protections
4. Oppose the transferring of asylum seekers to off shore processing centres
5. Oppose mandatory detention of asylum seekers and move towards community based processing
6. Cease the practice of sending unaccompanied minors to third countries; and
7. Allow asylum seekers released into the community to work, so that no undue burden is placed on refugee communities and supporter groups.