

BUV Resolution 15 March 2002 Assembly Minutes

Public Issues Network

After a time of discussion and questions, it was resolved to change the word review to abolish in resolution 1 of the proposed resolutions.

It was resolved:

On the basis of our Christian faith, and affirming Australia's commitment to human rights, this Assembly of the Baptist Union of Victoria calls on the Federal Government:

1. To abolish its policy of mandatory detention of asylum seekers without visas, in view of its international human rights obligations to receive and protect asylum seekers;

2. In the meantime, to ensure the humane treatment of detained asylum seekers by:

a) releasing as many as possible, particularly children and families, into the community,

b) making the assessment processes as fast and transparent as possible for all detainees, and

c) allowing media access to detention centres;

3. To immediately increase the immigration quota for refugees in the light of the current worldwide crisis;

4. To abolish the 'second-class' Temporary Protection Visa category for unauthorised arrivals, with its reduced benefits, increased restrictions, lack of family reunion, and the need to re-apply for asylum after three years;

5. To repeal the Border Control legislation of September 2001, designed to allow the Australian Government to turn away all 'boat people'; and

6. To adopt a more humanitarian approach in the public debate, appealing to compassion and tolerance rather than suspicion and fear.

It also calls on Victorian Baptist churches to:

7. Support refugee groups in their midst;

8. Consider ministry amongst asylum seekers and refugees in the community;

9. Offer practical support through the Baptist Refugee Support Network;
and

10. Contribute to the national debate on the way Australia treats asylum seekers and refugees.