



## MEDIA RELEASE

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# CRA calls for compassionate processing of Asylum Seekers

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) calls for a publicly administered system of immigration processing for asylum seekers, on the Australian mainland, in its recent submission to a Senate Inquiry into offshore processing and resettlement arrangements.

CRA also expressed deep concern about the lack of transparency regarding payments made by the Australian government to primary contractors, subcontractors and third parties involved in offshore processing and resettlement programs.

“International evidence demonstrates that secrecy around sites of incarceration leads to human rights abuses occurring in those sites, because the usual oversight over executive power by legal, parliamentary, media, and citizen sources is prevented,” said CRA President, Br. Gerard Brady CFC.

“We fear that un-visaed asylum seekers are being pushed out of sight, out of mind, and we echo the call of Pope Leo XIV to instead create societies where migrants and refugees are recognised as brothers and sisters, part of a family in which they can express their talents and participate fully in community life,” Br. Brady added.

This current Senate Inquiry has followed a series of recent amendments to the *Migration Act 1958* (Cth), that allow the federal government to pay third countries to receive un-visaed persons, remove the government’s responsibility to provide a non-citizen notice or opportunity for response when sending them to a third country, and allow for the validation of past visa decisions, even when made under outdated laws or on the basis of incorrect information.

“In our submission, we made clear that these legislative changes circumvent the international principle of nonrefoulement, shift Australia’s responsibilities for refugees and asylum seekers to a third country, and do not provide for any safeguards to prevent these persons’ harm, detention or further movement once they had been moved, including to the home country from which they had fled,” said Anne Walker, CRA National Executive Director.

“We also highlighted the lived experience of a member of CRA, the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, which has been involved in providing religious services to those held in the now-closed offshore immigration detention centre on Christmas Island, and their concerns that basic human needs are being resolved by bureaucratic policies of isolation,” she added.

“CRA has called for a more transparent processing of un-visaed persons, which can be achieved by returning immigration processing to the Australian mainland, under a system of public administration that upholds international law and human rights, and the basic dignity of the human person,” Anne concluded.

Read [CRA’s submission](#).

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