

HUMANITARIAN INTAKE MUST BE PROTECTED AMID RECORD GLOBAL DISPLACEMENT: CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES AUSTRALIA

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Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) acknowledges the release of the Coalition's migration policy and notes that all major parties – including the ALP, One Nation, and the Coalition – have now made statements on migration policy. The Greens' longstanding policy remains extant.

CSSA affirms that it is both legitimate and necessary for the quantum of migration to be debated openly and transparently in the public arena. However, we strongly recommend the humanitarian intake remain a clear priority in this debate, reflecting Australia's enduring commitment to protect the world's most vulnerable.

CSSA reiterates its longstanding position that Australia should maintain a substantial, non-discriminatory migration program with a generous humanitarian intake. This intake is a vital expression of our nation's compassion and respect for human dignity, and it should not be diminished.

The Coalition has announced plans to cut the humanitarian intake by half. CSSA cautions against any reduction in this critical program. At the end of 2025, there were 41.6 million refugees globally – including refugees under UNHCR's mandate, people in refugee-like situations, other people in need of international protection, and Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate – as well as 9 million asylum-seekers awaiting decisions on their claims. Additionally, 68.7 million people were displaced within their own countries due to conflict or violence.ⁱ

Dr Jerry Nockles, CEO of CSSA said: "The humanitarian intake is not just a number; it represents real people – families fleeing unimaginable hardship and danger. Cutting this intake by half at a time when global displacement is at record levels would be a significant reflection of our national conscience."

CSSA is encouraged by recent indications from the Government about maintaining the humanitarian intake but calls for a strong and definitive statement from the Minister for Home Affairs to provide certainty and reassurance. CSSA has sought clarification from the Minister but is yet to receive a response.

"We urge all political leaders to engage in the broader debate with integrity and respect for human dignity. The humanitarian intake must remain protected and central to Australia's migration policy," Dr Nockles added.

CSSA calls for migration policy to be debated openly and honestly in Parliament, ensuring all voices are heard and policies reflect the best interests of the whole community. Thoughtful, transparent policy-making is essential to address genuine challenges such as housing affordability and infrastructure pressures without resorting to reactive or divisive measures.

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About CSSA

CSSA is the national peak body for Catholic social service providers. CSSA's network of forty-two member agencies runs across all Australian States and Territories with a combined total of over seven hundred sites, delivering essential services to vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians.

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ⁱ <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends%5B/cscitation%5D>