

ECCV Position Paper

Asylum Seekers

August 2013 update on 24 April 2012 paper

1. ECCV believes that asylum seekers are owed the legal right to seek protection in Australia under its signed international agreement with the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and we will advocate for a compassionate, humanitarian and human rights approach to the treatment of asylum seekers, in particular those who travel irregularly by sea to Australia.
2. ECCV is aware that:
 - the 21st century has seen a considerable acceleration in the global movement of people and
 - in Australia considerable political and public debate has been generated by asylum seekers arriving by boat.
3. ECCV looks to our national body FECCA for leadership at the national level on immigration, refugee and asylum seeker policy.
4. ECCV calls upon all political parties in Australia to cooperate on a consistent cross-party approach to finding fair and equitable solutions that respect human rights in dealing with people seeking international protection as asylum seekers whether they arrive by air or sea.
5. ECCV emphasises that asylum seekers should not be feared or viewed as unwelcome guests. Those who gain protection as refugees and become permanent residents, embrace life in Australia with hard work, both as volunteers and in paid employment, and contribute significantly to our social cohesion and community harmony.
6. ECCV is aware that some of our member organisations are unsure about their role and responsibilities towards temporary visa holders and are stretched beyond reasonable limits to provide basic support and emergency care for newly arrived migrants, refugees and increasingly, asylum seekers.
7. ECCV believes that asylum seekers deserve adequate settlement support and in particular specialised mental health care as mandatory detention over prolonged periods of time can cause severe mental anguish and undue suffering.
8. In support of our members, ECCV will act as a broker to bring together the peak bodies and service providers whose main constituents are asylum seekers, to coordinate advocacy on asylum seeker issues at the state level.

9. ECCV will support the Victorian Government's Asylum Seeker Support Program which aims to strengthen the capacity of community-based asylum seekers to access critical support seven days a week including case work, housing, material aid and food programs. It also supports organisations to provide social, employment and skills development programs and a safe gathering space to reduce the risk of social isolation.

10. ECCV will also support the Victorian Government's Rights and Responsibilities Seminar program which is part of the Refugee Action Program (RAP), which provides rights and responsibilities seminars and information on the Australia's legal system, democratic institutions and the importance of participating in multicultural Victoria as engaged citizens.

(See also ECCV Position paper on Contemporary Migration Patterns August 2013)