


Be a 'Pilgrim of Hope' at this Election

A hand is shown holding a red heart-shaped cutout above a red ballot box. The heart contains the text 'Refugees and Asylum Seekers'. The background is a soft-focus bokeh of yellow and green light.

Refugees
and
Asylum
Seekers



INSTITUTE OF
SISTERS of MERCY
OF AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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Compassionate Australians are encouraged to take up Pope Francis' challenge to be 'Pilgrims of Hope'. You can do this by supporting those candidates in the Australian Federal election who favour a humane immigration policy.

In this Jubilee year, Pope Francis has said that, 'we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind'.¹ He said, 'Jesus is present in the sister or brother in need of our help'.²

Pope Francis also has stated that, 'the true common good is promoted when society and government... welcomes, protects, promotes and integrates the most fragile, unprotected and vulnerable'.³

For too long many candidates and political parties have sought to create a climate of fear which has removed and overlooked the humanity of people seeking refuge, making it easier to impose harsh and cruel policies on innocent people who are no different to us.

Many of our parliamentarians are happy to talk about *protecting our borders* but have forgotten about *protecting our sisters and brothers* who are in need.

A recent national poll by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre showed that most Australians want fairness and compassion for refugees and people seeking asylum.

The majority of voters believe that Australia has a responsibility to accept refugees and people seeking asylum, and that refugees who have arrived in Australia should be treated fairly. Voters do not want people sent back to dangerous situations.⁴

What can I do?

At this election you are invited to support those candidates who will pursue a compassionate and humanitarian response to refugees and people seeking asylum.

You can find out who these candidates are by:

1. Visiting the websites of organisations such as the Refugee Council of Australia, who will make announcements during the election and do a comparison of the policies of the major parties.

2. Writing to your local candidates or contacting their offices.

3. Speaking with your local candidates at an information booth or on election day.

What are some of the issues I can raise with candidates?

When speaking with the candidates you can ask them whether they support:

- People seeking asylum, currently living in Australia who arrived by boat after July 2013, being provided with a pathway to permanency. After years of living in our communities and contributing to society, people should be given a secure future.
- Refugees and people seeking asylum being given an ongoing bridging visa with work and study rights, continuous Medicare coverage, affordable legal assistance and basic income support.
- A clear and transparent pathway being established so that people can engage in a process for gaining a permanent visa and regaining hope.
- The resources of the Immigration section of the Department of Home Affairs being boosted so that processing of people left in limbo can occur.
- An end to offshore detention and processing.

Produced by the Mercy Refugee Advocacy Network
Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea
PO Box 284, Petersham, NSW 2049.



1. Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025, 9 May 2024

2. 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 29 September 2024

3. Letter to the Bishops of the USA, 10 February 2025

4. Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, 17 February 2025