



National Council of Churches in Australia



21 December 2022

The Hon Clare O'Neil MP
Minister for Home Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: clare.oneil.mp@aph.gov.au

The Hon Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship
Migrant Services & Multicultural Affairs

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Dear Ministers

Christmas Greetings from the National Council of Churches and the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce (ACRT).

At this time of the year, as we read and celebrate the Christian story of the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, we are reminded how the authorities react with violence and fear to Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and with his parents, Joseph and Mary, the child Jesus becomes a refugee and flees to safety in Egypt.

In this world where over 104 million people are displaced by violent conflict, disaster and climate change, we would like to thank you and your government for steps taken to change Australia's migration and refugee resettlement program since the Federal Election.

Recent changes announced this week about permanent residency to be offered to 19,000 refugees in the community who are holding temporary visas for up to 10 years is very welcome and joyous news.

The recommendations of the migration review were also heartening in reaffirming the tremendous contribution of skilled migrants and refugees in building our nation. We believe that the values of compassion and hospitality towards these groups by the Australian community are important to ensuring a strong and resilient Australia.

Our ACRT members operate at community level and have daily interaction with refugees, people seeking asylum and living with long-term visa uncertainty. We thank you for moving on changing some of the systemic injustices and harm for these groups living in Australia. No doubt we will be in contact with you about further issues of concern in 2023 but we assure you that this is in a spirit of partnership to work with you.

Thank you, and may you be blessed with peace and joy this festive season.

Yours faithfully

General Secretary

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Anglican Church

Antiochian
Orthodox Church

Armenian
Apostolic Church

Assyrian Church
of the East

Chinese Methodist
Church

Churches of Christ

Congregational
Federation

Coptic
Orthodox Church

Greek
Orthodox Church

Indian
Orthodox Church

Lutheran Church

Mar Thoma Church

Religious Society
of Friends (Quakers)

Roman Catholic Church

Romanian
Orthodox Church

Syrian
Orthodox Church

The Salvation Army

Uniting Church

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