

POST-ELECTION PRESS RELEASE

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Justice for
Refugees SA

The 2019 election has returned Scott Morrison and the LNP to government, with a continuation of refugee and asylum seeker policy that do not reflect fair and humane treatment. The election result has been a source of great distress for refugees and asylum seekers, especially those on Manus and Nauru who continue to be in limbo. A number of suicide attempts have taken place since the election, as people on Manus and Nauru fall further into despair that their circumstances will not change. The election result has also been a source of distress for advocates and community groups who offer practical support.

Prior to the election, J4RSA prepared and distributed leaflets and scorecards identifying the policies of the major parties and how they aligned with the priorities identified by J4RSA and refugee advocate groups. It had been hoped that kindness and compassion would win the election. J4RSA fought hard on urging people to vote for *fair, not fear*. Those efforts will continue with strategies to bring about a fair change.

J4RSA will continue to focus on:

- A permanent end to offshore detention and processing
- Replacing temporary visas with a pathway to permanency and citizenship
- Repealing cuts to Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) payments
- An increase Australia's refugee and humanitarian intake

The government has stated their determination to repeal the Medevac Bill. The government continues to approach policy for boat arrivals from a punitive perspective, rather than from a position of responsibility that Australia has to ensure the wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers, and provide a pathway going forward so they are able to plan for a future where they have freedom and hope.

Changes to the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) program would restrict numbers of asylum seekers and refugees able to receive the financial and practical support they need. Thousands would no longer be eligible. Vulnerable people would be abandoned both onshore and offshore, placing a greater load on support from church and community groups.

J4RSA Chair, Rev Sandy Boyce said, "People may say it is too hard to sustain a reasoned action when it feels like there is a block that cannot be overcome. But despite the challenges, we can't abandon these people when they are so vulnerable. It is important to change the conversation in the community in order to bring about change in policies".

"We have an opportunity to humanise Scott Morrison's mantra, 'if you have a go, you get a go'. Refugees contribute strongly to the community and to the economy when they are given an opportunity", said Rev Boyce.

This year's theme for Refugee Week (16–22 June) is 'A world of stories' – a time of sharing, a time of listening. J4RSA will contribute to a public post-election forum on refugees and asylum seekers on 18 June and also a collaboration with the Migration Museum on 22 June, sharing stories from around the world.

J4RSA will continue its work for courageous, considered and compassionate change.

Contact:

Molly Jureidini, Coordinator, Justice for Refugees SA, info@justiceforrefugeessa.org, 8210 8171

Rev Sandy Boyce, Chair, Justice for Refugees SA, sandyboyce@gmail.com, 0409 283 004