



30 June 2021

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: National Refugee Week 2021

The theme of National Refugee Week 2021 was '*Unity – The way forward.*' The Global COVID-19 Pandemic has highlighted to us now, more than ever, the need for global solidarity to ensure that all people can live in safety, with good health and dignity. As Australia faces another COVID-19 outbreak, only through unity and recognising our common humanity, can we all work together to not only survive, but to allow individuals, families and communities, both in Australia and globally, to flourish.

The world faces another crisis to which we must apply the same approach. In the past year, more than 82.4 million men, women and children were displaced across the world, having to flee wars, violence, unfounded persecution, human rights violations, dire economic conditions, food insecurity and climate change crises. Whilst we are pleased that Australia is one of the world's more generous contributors to international refugee resettlement efforts, annual refugee resettlement globally never exceeds more than 1% of the total refugee population. As a result of the ongoing pandemic, resettlement programs around the world have largely been stalled, including in Australia, where we have also reduced our quota for resettlement visas. With limited options for refugees to reach safety in Australia via the Refugee and Humanitarian Program, more people will be forced to take dangerous journeys to attempt to reach Australian shores, without a visa, to preserve their lives.

Australia, as a signatory of the *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, must step up to meet this challenge and alleviate suffering. Improvements are needed to our migration policies to fulfil the rights and needs of some of the world's vulnerable peoples. All people have a right to life, liberty and security of person, and to seek refuge and asylum if needed to achieve this. Furthermore, when Australia practices global solidarity, resettling those seeking refuge and asylum, and supports them to thrive in our society, they in turn give back to Australia, enriching our communities through sharing their diverse cultures and traditions, skills, talents and friendship. So this year, we ask that you truly embrace *unity as the way forward*, and bring about changes to our policies and legislation that enact this.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Carroll FMS
President

Anne Walker
National Executive Director