



**SHAPING A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL**

**Statement of Principle:  
Asylum Seekers**

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**#BEPARTOFTHECHANGE**   

**[www.mdaltd.org.au](http://www.mdaltd.org.au)**

## Statement of Principle – Asylum Seekers

MDA supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations with Australia's support in 1948. MDA also supports the positions taken by successive Australian government to ratify a range of other human rights instruments, such as the Refugee Convention, the Convention Against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A central element of human rights is the right of all persecuted people to seek asylum in another country and not be returned to situations of danger.

MDA recognises the importance of organisations and leaders expressing support for human rights and helping ensure the community is aware of and supports actions which respect the rights of asylum seekers and refugees. Demonising asylum seekers not only risks increasing public antagonism, it also hinders effective re-settlement of refugees, which in turn can prevent each individual from fully participating in Australia's society and economy.

MDA acknowledges that in some countries, there are no legal avenues for people to apply for refugee status through their nation's official channels and they therefore have to flee and seek asylum to ensure safety for themselves and their families.

MDA believes all refugees and asylum seekers should be treated equally, and in accordance with the human rights principles Australia has officially expressed support for.

Dividing refugees who arrive under the Humanitarian Program from those who arrive by boat only serves to create two different classes of refugees. For many years, a very large majority of those who have arrived by boat to seek asylum are found to be refugees and granted permanent protection.

MDA recognises that Australia has an obligation under international law to afford protection to those seeking asylum and to the principal of not returning people to danger.

MDA believes it is in the best interests of all Australians for refugees to be provided with sufficient support upon arrival to enable them to participate fully in our economy and community as quickly as possible. MDA commits to doing all we can to contribute effectively in this nation building task.