



South West Action for Refugees

South West Victorians supporting refugees

P.O. Box 1039, Warrnambool Vic 3280
Phone: 5560 5894 Fax: 5560 5895
Web site: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~swar/>

Who we are and what we are on about

South West Action for Refugees is a community organisation composed of Australians who live in the South West of Victoria, principally in Warrnambool and the surrounding area. We believe the current Federal Government policies and actions relating to refugees and asylum seekers are morally and ethically flawed. We also believe these policies and actions are hypocritical in relation to Australia's human rights record in the international arena that has been developed over many years.

In April 2002 a public forum was organised to inform people more about the truth behind the various reports on the one hand and the Government's pronouncements on the other. The forum was a great success with over 300 people attending. As a result of that forum, it became apparent that many people in our region, from all walks of life, and shades of political and religious beliefs, were keen to follow up in whatever way they could. The meeting facilitated the formation of our group **South West Action for Refugees (SWAR)**.

A simple administrative structure has been created, with a central committee consisting of a co-ordinator, secretary, treasurer, communication officers and three individuals who co-ordinate the three action groups.

These groups take particular responsibility for and are active in -

1. Providing support for asylum seekers still detained either in Australia or offshore as part of the "pacific solution".
2. Changing community attitudes and political policies relating to asylum seekers.
3. Providing emotional and physical support for asylum seekers released and living in the Australian community.

Each of these groups meets independently to co-ordinate specific actions in support of our mission (*letter writing, lobbying politicians, making contacts with asylum seekers in the community and raising funds to assist both detained and released asylum seekers*). We have over one hundred active members listed, and we organise using a highly effective, electronic and mail based system of communication. We have links with other groups such as [Rural Australians for Refugees](#), [Spare Rooms for Refugees](#) and [Australians for Just Refugee Programs](#).



South West Action for Refugees

South West Victorians supporting refugees

P.O. Box 1039, Warrnambool Vic 3280
Phone: 5560 5894 Fax: 5560 5895
Web site: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~swar/>

SWAR's Mission Statement [24 June 2002]

South West Action for Refugees will work towards ensuring:

1. All people travelling to Australia to seek asylum are received onto the Australian mainland rather than being transported to other countries.
2. All people travelling to Australia by boat to seek asylum are allowed to continue their journey to Australia; emergency assistance is provided to all such boat travellers in need.
3. All people arriving in Australia to seek asylum are received and assessed according to the United Nations Convention on Refugees.
4. All people arriving in Australia to seek asylum are not held in detention for more than a short period of time; rather the current long term detention system is replaced with a viable and humane alternative system based on asylum seekers living in Australian communities.
5. Australian detention centres are managed in a way that is fully accountable to the Australian public.
6. Asylum seekers currently held in detention by the Australian government receive adequate physical and emotional support.
7. Asylum seekers living in Australian communities receive adequate physical and emotional support.
8. Holders of Temporary Protection Visas are allowed to apply for permanent residency while in Australia, to commence when their Temporary Protection Visa term expires; criteria for successful applications will be clearly stated and applied consistently to all applicants.
9. Australia substantially increases the annual quota of refugees allowed to stay in Australia from the 2001 level of 12,000.
10. Australia leads international cooperative efforts to find solutions to global refugee crises.
11. Australia works to find alternative options to 'people smuggling' for asylum seekers.
12. Australia promotes the ongoing review of international conventions on refugees and revisions to address current inadequacies.