



## Immigration and Refugees

Policy Category: D. Care for People

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### Principles

*The Australian Greens believe that:*

1. the presence in Australia of people of many cultural backgrounds greatly enriches our society and should be celebrated.
2. Australian society, culture and the economy has benefited, and will continue to benefit, from immigration of people from around the world.
3. immigration must be non-discriminatory on the grounds of nationality, ethnic origin, religion, language, gender, disability, sexuality, age or socioeconomic background.
4. Australia has humanitarian and legal obligations to accept refugees and reunite families.
5. asylum seekers and refugees are no more of a threat to our borders or to society than anyone else and must be treated with compassion and dignity.
6. Australia must assess in good faith all asylum seekers who arrive on our mainland or any of our islands, without discrimination based on the method of arrival.

### Goals

*The Australian Greens want:*

7. an immigration program that is predominantly based on family reunions and other special humanitarian criteria as defined by international human rights Conventions.
8. all migrants to be given access to a full range of culturally sensitive, appropriate health services including a comprehensive medical examination on arrival.
9. services for new migrants to include appropriate English language classes, social security, legal and interpreter services, programs to ease transition to Australia's multicultural society, and post-trauma counselling where needed.
10. the elimination of the policies of mandatory detention, the 'Pacific solution', temporary protection visas and other forms of harsh, punitive or discriminatory treatment of asylum seekers and refugees.
11. asylum seekers who arrive without a valid visa to have their claims for asylum assessed while living in the community.
12. planning for climate change refugees with a particular focus on the Asia-Pacific region.

### Measures

*The Australian Greens will:*

13. ensure that potential immigrants are not unfairly discriminated against on any grounds.
14. increase the share of places for off-shore refugees and humanitarian entrants.
15. ensure that funding for public and community sector agencies providing migrant-specific services is increased to a level sufficient to provide adequate, effective and timely support.
16. ensure the development of networks, materials and programs that increase community understanding of the causes and benefits of migration.
17. abolish mandatory and indefinite detention of asylum seekers.

## AUSTRALIAN GREENS POLICY: Immigration and Refugees (cont'd)

[www.greens.org.au/about/policies](http://www.greens.org.au/about/policies)

18. abolish discriminatory separation of refugees into permanent and temporary visa categories based on whether or not they arrived with a valid visa.
19. abolish the 'seven day rule' legislation whereby asylum seekers cannot gain a permanent protection visa if they have spent seven days in a third country.
20. restore the Australian migration zone to match Australia's territory and accept responsibility for processing all asylum seekers who seek Australia's protection within the migration zone.
21. ensure asylum seekers are fully informed of their rights on arrival and given immediate access to legal assistance.
22. restore asylum seekers' legal right to challenge decisions that affect them in the courts.
23. replace the current system of humanitarian visas (granted only by the Immigration Minister after rejection as a refugee) with an open, accountable humanitarian visa process incorporating a humanitarian review tribunal.
24. house asylum seekers who arrive without a valid visa in publicly owned and managed open reception centres, where entry and exit to these centres are unrestricted except where prohibited for medical or security reasons specified in clause 28.
25. ensure that initial assessment of refugee status is completed within 90 days.
26. grant asylum seekers an asylum application visa (AAV) and assist without delay their move into the community provided medical and security checks are satisfied or after 14 days has passed, whichever occurs first.
27. ensure asylum seekers living in the community while their claim is assessed will be granted an AAV which will entitle them to travel, work, income support and access to ongoing educational and medical services anywhere within Australia while their claims for asylum are assessed.
28. deny an AAV if security checks demonstrate the person poses a serious criminal threat to the Australian community or if the person has not remained housed in the reception centre while the medical and security checks were completed.
29. ensure that refusal to grant an AAV is reviewable at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.
30. house those people refused an AAV in separate, appropriate, publicly owned and managed facilities close to urban areas.
31. ensure that, if refugee status is refused and the person cannot be repatriated, the AAV will remain in force until he or she can be repatriated.
32. ensure that the number of AAVs given to asylum seekers who arrive without a valid visa has no impact on the prescribed number of off-shore refugee and humanitarian entrants that Australia accepts.
33. support skilled migration programs that do not drain critical skills from other countries and do not substitute for training or undermine wages and conditions in Australia.
34. ensure that Australia adequately contributes to the funding of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).
35. ensure that Australia adopts a definition of environmental refugee in its assessment criteria and works in the UN system for inclusion of a definition in the United Nations Refugee Convention.
36. ensure that no family unit is forcibly separated by the Australian assessment processes.
37. grant the families of approved asylum seekers permission to migrate to Australia for family reunions within a reasonable time, in accordance with the UNHCR humanitarian program.