



# Media Release

4 November 2016

## Salvation Army opposes cruel refugee ban

The Salvation Army strongly opposes the Australian Government's recent proposal to amend the *Migration Act 1958*. The amendments would ban asylum seekers who have arrived by boat from obtaining an Australian visa - consequently eliminating any opportunity for such people to settle in Australia. We consider this to be an unnecessarily harsh policy response.

It is our contention that the proposed amendments to legislation will cause further distress to individuals who have already experienced considerable trauma. Along with many other churches and organisations, on a daily basis, we work with people who have sought refuge and settled in Australia. It is our experience that people seeking asylum and refuge are valuable, contributing members of Australian society who offer much to our diverse and multicultural communities.

The Salvation Army maintains that people seeking asylum and refuge should not be discriminated against based on their mode of arrival in Australia<sup>1</sup> - a stance echoed in the United Nations Refugee Convention.

The Salvation Army believes that both asylum seekers and refugees should be assessed and offered assistance to settle and become contributing members of society as quickly as possible<sup>2</sup>. The Salvation Army advocates for the development of proactive, compassionate and appropriate human rights focused policies in relation to all people seeking asylum and refuge<sup>3</sup>.

Through its work in 128 countries, The Salvation Army is aware that there are numerous other, more humane, options for the processing and resettlement of asylum seekers and refugees than those being proposed by the Australian government. We urge the Government to consider such options.

We strongly implore the Government to reconsider its proposed amendments to the *Migration Act 1958*. As an organisation committed to the alleviation of human suffering and distress The Salvation Army will continue to support and assist those needing refuge and asylum as they seek to resettle in safety.

**ENDS**

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR, Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees  
<<http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3b66c2aa10.pdf>>

<sup>2</sup> The Salvation Army, 2016, International Positional Statement Refugee and Asylum Seekers, <[https://s3.amazonaws.com/cache.salvationarmy.org/32a03e57-d3c7-4ca8-8dd9-d131e754235c\\_IPS+on+Asylum+Seekers+and+Refugees+-approved+by+General+17+MAY+16+PM+EDIT.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/cache.salvationarmy.org/32a03e57-d3c7-4ca8-8dd9-d131e754235c_IPS+on+Asylum+Seekers+and+Refugees+-approved+by+General+17+MAY+16+PM+EDIT.pdf)>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid