

Asylum seeker policies must abide by our international obligations

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) calls on both the Australian Government and the Opposition to stand by Australia's international obligations and responsibilities, in response to the positions taken by both major parties on boat turnbacks.

FECCA Acting Chair, Eugenia Grammatikakis said, "We would like to reiterate our strong stance, in line with a human rights based approach and our international obligations, against boat turnbacks, offshore processing and denying asylum seekers who arrive by boat and are found to be refugees the right to be resettled in Australia."

As a signatory to the Refugee Convention, Australia has committed to ensure that asylum seekers and refugees have the right to enter a country for the purposes of seeking asylum, regardless of how they arrive or whether they hold valid travel or identity documents.

As the national peak body representing Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities and their organisations, we support a sustainable and non-discriminatory humanitarian program with a longer-term vision, that is responsive to refugee situations across the world and meets the growing global needs for resettlement.

Australia should take on a leadership role and channel its diplomatic efforts towards improving regional cooperation on the refugee protection in Asia-Pacific, while also genuinely promoting the safety and human rights of those seeking asylum. "Australia should place greater focus on working with the region's key stakeholders to establish workable regional arrangements to ensure safer ways to seek protection," Ms Grammatikakis concluded.

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