ANGLICAN MOTHERS UNION AUSTRALIA

New Possibilities

Social Issues & Action News June 2021

How many Refugees are there in the world and where are they from?

UNHCR estimated for 30 June 2020

People forcibly displaced:

80 million

Refugees:

26 million

More than two-thirds (67%) come from only five countries:

Syria

Afghanistan

South Sudan

Venezuela

Myanmar

AUSTRALIA WELCOMES REFUGEES

The number of refugees Australia accepts has varied in recent years.

Australia accepted and resettled 12,706 refugees during the 2018 calendar year

The federal budget set the ceiling of 13,750 places for the Refugee and Humanitarian Program in 2021 and this will continue until 2024

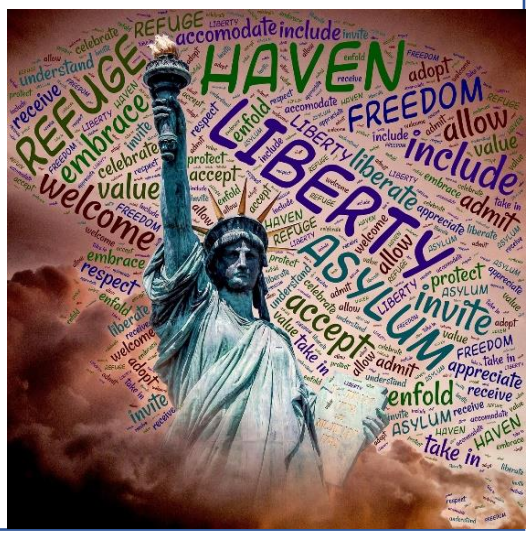
REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Bishop Daniel Abot and his wife Rachel were guest speakers at the Brisbane Diocesan Council meeting in Toowoomba in May. Bishop Daniel is a Resource Church specialist working with culturally and linguistically diverse congregations in the diocese. He spoke of his childhood experiences in South Sudan and of his long walk to freedom, his time in refugee camps and his joy in re-settlement in Australia, his call to serve God in his homeland. In 2005 while working for Anglicare, he returned to South Sudan and Kenya. He visited Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, where he had lived for nine years, to see how peace was being received and to gauge people's perception of their chance of repatriation back to South Sudan. He was greatly troubled by the things he saw, including starvation, orphans without care, and many people who had lost everything and had little hope for the future despite the peace agreement. He spoke also of the work of Mothers' Union and the wonderful support they offer to families in South Sudan.

Refugee Week was celebrated 20 to 26 June 2021 with the theme for this year **UNITY – the way forward**, a reminder that, regardless of our differences, we all share a common humanity. This was an time to give thanks for the contribution refugees have made to our society and to highlight the importance of working together to guarantee better opportunities for refugees in Australia. Some of the issues raised during Refugee Week included the process of seeking asylum in Australia, the challenges of living here on a Temporary Visa, and the challenges for refugee children and young people.

A vigil was held in support of the Murugappan family. I realise people have very strong views about whether this family should be deported to Sri Lanka or allowed to stay in Australia. I do feel strongly that they must be treated with more kindness and compassion than they are shown at present. Some of the commentary around this family seems hard-hearted and cruel. We are told that compassion has no place in decisions about immigration policy. Is that true? I pray for the children in detention, caught up in this political situation.

Susan Skowronski
Social Issues & Action



Prayer for asylum seekers and refugees

Lord Jesus, watch over all families who have been forced to leave their homes and communities through war, oppression or poverty. Protect them on their journeys and bring them safely to a place where you would have them be. May they feel welcomed and respected in the communities they join. Amen