



2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

The goal of the RAR Executive is to strengthen and grow our organisation and to provide leadership which is responsive to our members' vision for a humane society in our efforts, we are building on the solid base that has been developed by past leaders of RAR since 2001 in accordance with the 10 point plan.

The national executive in 2017/18 agreed that we would work to achieve a leadership voice for rural and regional support for people seeking refuge and asylum by building:

- a solid foundation,
- membership,
- membership participation,
- campaigning capacity,
- partnerships,
- political relationships.

BUILDING A SOLID FOUNDATION

National Incorporation was achieved with the initial Model Rules agreed. The Model Rules are to be refined at the first AGM. National incorporation enables all groups who do not have their own incorporation to become incorporated under Rural Australians for Refugees Inc.

Public liability insurance arrangements were entered into with Ansvar Insurance through the introduction of 'Circle of Friends' in South Australia. RAR extends our appreciation to 'Circle of Friends' for their generous support in this endeavour.

Good governance is practiced with the introduction of a Membership Form, Code of Conduct, role descriptions for members of national executive and policies on AGM and Elections, Financial Management, Communication and Advocacy Framework.

BUILDING MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Over the last 12 months we have welcomed McMillan for Refugees in Gippsland, North West Coast Tassie Nannas, Albany in Western Australia, Maleny, MacKay and Cairns in Queensland and Gannewarra in Kerang in Victoria. Tamworth and Wagga Wagga have expressed interest in forming groups and we have a number of individuals who have nominated as our supporters. Buderim Buddies for Refugees in Queensland and Circle of Friends in South Australia have joined our network.

Membership participation has included circulation of open letters and drafts of letters to politicians, support for social media, exchange of ideas between groups and instant support when calls for assistance have been circulated.

The home hosting program is breaking down barriers through the fostering of relationships that respect individual and cultural differences. It is also increasing awareness of opportunities in rural

and regional communities. It is conducted extensively in NSW and Victoria with groups sharing ideas and working towards a national profile.

SUPPORTING GROUPS AND BUILDING CAMPAIGN CAPACITY

Social media including facebook, twitter, Instagram and website locally and nationally provide valuable information and campaign support. Thank you to Zali Garrety and Caitlin Rowe and all members of the social media team for their fantastic efforts over the last 12 months particularly during the RAR Campaign leading up to the closure of the detention centre on Manus and to the transfer of the refugees to the camps at Lorengau.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Our committee has been working closely with many other organisations who advocate for people seeking refuge and asylum to make sure we can share ideas, resources and maximise the effect of our efforts. They include Refugee Council, End child Detention Coalition, Amnesty(National), Save the Children, ARAN, ASRC (Melbourne), ASC (Sydney) Australian Refugee Association (ARA), UNHCR.

RAR has played an active role in joint sector planning meetings to develop campaigns around priority areas. A regional and rural perspective and RAR priorities are promoted in these meetings and in our work in Canberra which include:

- The closure of onshore and offshore detention centres.
- Increase in the resettlement quota with more planned settlement in regional and rural towns.
- An increase in community sponsorship places outside of quota with concessional visa charges with a priority for regional and rural communities.
- Priority special emergency places for vulnerable Rohingya especially women and children at risk.
- Improved diplomatic and aid efforts to address the Rohingya situation, in relation to which a position statement has been drafted.
- An immediate reversal of the securitised immigration detention visit procedures.

BUILDING AND USING POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Members in their local regions are engaging with their local state and federal members, church groups and service organisations building relationships and gaining credibility.

At a national level the executive is establishing a non-party political brand recognition amongst politicians and staff and gaining credibility on refugee, asylum and resettlement issues.

RAR NATIONAL CONFERENCE

National Conference provides an ideal opportunity for planning our next steps at RAR and for 'Building the Future'. The support from our membership, the work of Conference Convenor Penny Vine and her dedicated team is really appreciated.

THANK YOU

Our many achievements in 2017/18 are attributable to the work of Penny Vine Secretary, Margaret Rasa Treasurer, Ruth Fluhr Vice President and you the members. There was never once when the call went out for help that it was not answered within minutes. This is truly a wonderful organisation.