

The Jim Tulip Candidates Forum

Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group is sending these questions to the candidates in Macquarie contesting the Federal election from the 3 major parties. We aim to enable voters to make an informed decision on this issue when considering their choice of candidate and party. Despite repeated attempts to elicit a response to the questions from the Liberal candidate Sarah Richards the return of the completed questionnaire never eventuated.



Justice with compassion

It is legal for people to seek safety and asylum in Australia. Does your party say it is 'illegal'? If so why?

- G** The Greens say it is legal. It is also legal to arrive by boat or without travel documents. It is, however, a violation of Article 31 of the Refugee Convention to penalise people who arrive without travel documents, as the Australian Government continues to do.
- L** No. Under the Refugee Convention, asylum seekers have the right to seek protection. Labor rejects referring to asylum seekers as 'illegals'.
- L** No response.

How will your party support people seeking asylum to rebuild their lives in our community?

- G** The Greens will introduce a seven day limit for onshore detention, restore SRSS payments and provide access to housing, Medicare, trauma and torture counseling, English language courses and employment assistance.
- L** Labor believes Australia can do our part to address the global migration crisis while retaining strong border protection measures. If Labor forms government, we have committed to progressively increasing Australia's annual humanitarian intake to 27,000, and to develop over time a community sponsored refugee program of 5000 per year.
- L** No response.

Will your party end offshore detention for people seeking asylum. If not why not?

- G** Yes. The Greens will create a fairer, safer system, help more people, meet our obligations under international law, and save \$1.9 billion over four years.
- L** Labor supports offshore processing as part of a suite of border protection measures because we know it prevents vulnerable people from risking their lives at sea. But regional processing locations have become places of indefinite detention under the Liberals because they have failed to negotiate suitable third country resettlement options. Labor has committed as a priority to accept New Zealand's offer to resettle eligible refugees from Manus and Nauru and to negotiate suitable conditions so that it does not act as an incentive to people smugglers. We will also prioritise the negotiation of other suitable third country resettlement arrangements for those eligible refugees remaining on Manus and Nauru.
- L** No response.

Will your party support the re-unification of refugee families?

- G** Yes. No family should be forcibly separated by Australia's immigration assessment processes and family reunion must be prioritised.

- L** Labor recognises that family reunion for migrants and refugees is an important factor in successful settlement. We will continue to support this principle.

- L** No response.

Australian Law applies equally to us all. Does your party consider that this includes refugees and people seeking asylum?

- G** Yes. Australia must uphold its humanitarian and legal obligations to people seeking asylum and reunite families as required by international human rights law and the Refugee Convention 1951 and its Protocol.
- L** All individuals in Australia, whether living or visiting here, are subject to Australian laws. Those here as refugees or asylum seekers are equally subject to those laws.
- L** No response.

Does your party support our government working with our neighbouring countries and UNHCR in the assessments and safe settlement of people seeking asylum?

- G** Yes. The Greens will provide \$500 million over four years to the UNHCR and partner countries to establish a system that can assess people's claims for protection and provide a 'dignity package' allowing access to healthcare, education, English classes and work permits.

- L** If elected, a Labor government will seek to increase Australia's engagement with regional nations and the UNHCR to address the global migration crisis. Labor has committed to providing \$500 million to the UNHCR to deliver stronger asylum seeker assessment and resettlement processes across the region.
- L** No response.

Will your party introduce permanent protection visas to those refugees in Australia who currently have temporary protection visas so they can get long-term employment and make plans for the future?

- G** The Greens will abolish Temporary Protection Visas and reintroduce Permanent Protection Visas for refugees so they can rebuild their lives in Australia without fear of deportation.
- L** Yes, Labor will abolish Temporary Protection Visas and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas, which leave people in a state of indefinite limbo, and place those found to be genuine refugees on permanent protection visas.
- L** No response.

Jim Tulip was one of our founding members, a tireless worker for compassion and justice who frequently organized election forums.

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