



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office



Catholic Church Calls for Serious Discussion to Find a Better Way of Dealing with Asylum Seekers **Media Release** **31 August, 2011**

The Catholic Church today welcomed the decision of the High Court to grant a permanent injunction against the deportation of two asylum seekers to Malaysia. In the wake of the decision, the Catholic Church has offered to work with the Government to find a more appropriate way of dealing with asylum seekers.

“The Catholic Church’s views about the treatment of asylum seekers are well known. Our views were outlined in the Church’s recent submission to the Joint Select Committee’s Inquiry into Australia’s Immigration Detention Network.” Bishop Gerard Hanna, the Bishops’ Representative for Migrants and Refugees, said today upon hearing the High Court’s decision.

“The Government knows our views and it also knows of the work that the Church does to assist asylum seekers both in detention and after their release.”

The High Court has held that Australia must continue to process claims of any asylum seeker who arrives here. “It is the responsibility of all civil nations to do so” he said.

“But now is not a time for celebration or recrimination. Rather, now is the time for all people of good will to work together to find a better way of dealing with asylum seekers. The Catholic Church stands ready to work with the Minister, the Department and all other people of good will to find a better way”

“It is to be hoped that this High Court decision does not lead to crass politics in Australia but rather to a determination to find reasonable and just outcomes for those seeking asylum” said Bishop Hanna.

In pursuit of the common good for all humanity, the Catholic Church encourages Australia to continue to receive the additional 4000 refugees over the next four years. “Malaysia is host to over 94,000 refugees; Australia must continue to take part in this responsibility which is a global phenomenon” said Bishop Hanna.

For media enquiries or to arrange an interview with Fr Maurizio Pettenà, please contact Beth Doherty on 0407 081 256 or Joe Moloney on 02 6201 9848.