



**Media Release
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Church advocates proactive and compassionate approach to asylum seekers

In the wake of an increased number of boat-arrivals on Australian shores, the Catholic Church restates its position of compassion toward those who genuinely seek asylum, and supports all efforts to quickly resolve their claims.

The Catholic Bishops of Australia urge the Government and the Opposition to continue the dialogue with our neighbouring countries and also with the countries where these asylum seekers and refugees are coming from.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Delegate for Migrant and Refugee Issues Bishop Joseph Grech acknowledged the need to safeguard national security but urged that compassion not be sacrificed for those who are in genuine need of help and asylum.

“We remain committed to pursuing a humanitarian approach in assisting people who have fled persecution and danger”, he said.

“It is essential that instead of simply pledging to return asylum seekers to situations of conflict, we must seek solutions so that people would not necessarily have to leave their own country and also to continue efforts to put a stop to those who are making huge financial profits out of people smuggling”, he said.

The Catholic Church remains committed to working in collaboration with government to provide continuing pastoral care and support to genuine asylum seekers and refugees, and to ensure due care for of all those who flee persecution in their lands.

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