



11 March 2013

Right to work a fundamental human right

No-one can question the determination of asylum seekers. Having fled persecution and terror, they are highly-motivated to rebuild their lives.

Asylum seekers want to work – it builds self-esteem, resilience and provides vital connections in the community.

But not all asylum seekers in the community have the right to work.

For asylum seekers on bridging visas who arrive by boat after 13 August, there is no right to work.

Under the “no advantage” test, the denial of this right to work is another punishment based on their mode of arrival.

Australians are rightly critical of non-Refugee Convention countries in the Asia-Pacific region that deny asylum seekers and refugees the right to work.

But Australia is a signatory to the Refugee Convention. All asylum seekers should enjoy the right to work as a fundamental human right.

It's in no-one's interests to force asylum seekers onto welfare without any training or skill development for years.

Some 90.8 per cent of asylum seekers who arrive by boat become permanent residents – so why are we denying thousands of productive people the right to work?

How you can help

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre has brought together more than 50 agencies and 1200 individuals to support a campaign to:

- Extend the right to work to all asylum seekers released into the community on bridging visas, regardless of mode or date of arrival or stage in the refugee determination process.
- Ensure the right to work is accompanied by the provision of basic employment support services to increase the asylum seekers chance of employment.

Sign on to the Right to Work campaign at <http://righttowork.com.au/>

Essential reading

Right to Work campaign background
<http://righttowork.com.au/resources/>

Refugee Council of Australia media release on the Government's "no advantage" test
http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/121121_Noadvantage.pdf

Feedback is encouraged

Please share any responses you receive through your advocacy work. Send any feedback to media@refugeecouncil.org.au

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