



Social Justice STOCKTAKE



Treatment of refugees and asylum seekers

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Were you surprised by the Stocktake results showing that refugees and people seeking asylum are not a priority concern for Australians?

When we look at the overall results what we see is that issues that relate to particular cohorts are all ranked lower than the more general injustices. Many Australians are not aware of just how much disadvantage is experienced by refugees and people seeking asylum after they arrive in Australia. It is also possible that language, trauma and financial constraints may be barriers to refugees and people seeking asylum being visible participants in the local community.

Do you believe the COVID-19 pandemic is partially responsible for the result?

It is impossible to judge from these results what impact COVID-19 has had but there certainly has been a general increase in disadvantage and hardship which may have led to the more every-day, general social justice issues being identified so consistently and commonly.

What can The Salvation Army offer someone seeking asylum?

The Salvation Army can provide support and referrals to people seeking asylum, primarily through our Doorways Program, with some more specialised services in different parts of Australia. Details for our financial support services (who can also help out with referrals) can be found at <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/financial-assistance/>.

What can Australia as a nation do to support those who are seeking refuge and asylum?

In Australia, people seeking asylum have limited access to the kinds of support that citizens and permanent residents are able to access. As a nation we need to ensure that people seeking asylum are supported in a way that allows them to live with dignity and does not make them more vulnerable to other injustices such as family violence or worker exploitation.

What can your average Australian do about this issue?

Every Australian can be a friend to people from refugee backgrounds and people seeking asylum. There are many barriers to refugees and asylum seekers engaging in our communities that we, as individuals, can help break down by making sure our events and spaces are inclusive and accessible.

We can also question and challenge the misinformation around asylum seekers that drives stigma and discrimination against people seeking asylum.