



# Refugee Council of Australia

**STRATEGIC PLAN | 2022 - 2024 |**

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# FOREWORD

I would like to invite you to engage with our new Strategic Plan by firstly acknowledging the traditional Owners and Custodians of the Land I find myself on – the Cabrogal People of the Darug Nation. I pay my respect to their caretaking of the mountains, rivers and creeks and the deep unbroken connection to the Country. I pay my respect to the Elders, past present and emerging. As a former refugee I have felt embraced and cared for by this Country and its Custodians and I express my gratitude.

I would also like to acknowledge people with lived experience of seeking refuge in Australia, their strength and determination, their wisdom, knowledge and skills and their contribution to the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) and wider Australian society. I am the first President with lived refugee experience and I have worked with other refugees for over 30 years. I have heard stories of fear and terror yet I also witnessed inspirational stories of survival, courage and immense growth. It is this courage, wisdom, knowledge, skills and capacities we wish to bring to RCOA as it celebrates its 40th anniversary!

The anniversary marks a significant milestone in advocating on refugee and asylum issues nationally and internationally. Over these years, we have grown as an organisation, developing and leading research, advocacy and programs which aim to raise awareness and support for refugees. We have continued to create spaces for people with lived experience to influence decisions that impact their lives. We have sought to walk alongside and amplify voices of those with refugee experience. We are committed to ensuring refugee voices take the centre stage throughout all areas of our work.

This strategic plan builds on our strengths and recognises new opportunities. We are proud of our partnerships with refugee communities and the wider refugee advocacy sector. Our work is only possible through collaboration and networks created by our member organisations. Our strategic plan will continue building on this approach through recognition and further relationship building across our member base.

The strategic plan also provides a clear direction for our organisation for the next three years. We look forward to working alongside refugee and asylum-seeking communities, our members, partners and supporters in implementing the plan.

Jasmina Bajraktarevic-Hayward  
President

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## VISION

For the voices of refugees to be heard, the rights of refugees to be respected, the humanity of refugees valued, and the contribution and leadership of refugees celebrated.

## PURPOSE

To advocate for the development of humane, lawful and constructive policies towards refugees and people seeking asylum by Australian and other governments and their communities.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These principles guide how we work and make decisions on refugee and asylum policy.

- 1. Justice and the rule of law** Maintaining a rigorous commitment to justice and the rule of law, in line with the principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Refugee Convention, the Conventions on Statelessness and other core international human rights treaties.
  - 2. Lived experience** Giving priority to the views, concerns and ideas of refugees and people seeking asylum, privileging their views over the views of people with greater power and influence, emphasising their right to be represented when decisions are being made about their future.
  - 3. Respecting diversity** Respecting the diversity within all populations of forcibly displaced people, ensuring that specific attention is given to the needs, concerns and perspectives of people who are even more marginalised because of their race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, identity, faith, or sexuality.
  - 4. Inclusion and respect** Promoting a vision of Australia based on inclusion and respect, advocating against policies which exclude or stigmatise, undermine human dignity or punish people for political purposes.
  - 5. Shared responsibility** Advocating for appropriate sharing of responsibility between nations for people requiring protection, paying particular attention to Australia's current and potential role.
  - 6. Non-partisan and collective perspectives** Developing non-partisan positions based on broad consultation and evidence-based research. Providing leadership by authentically representing a collective view of RCOA's members and refugee communities in Australia on matters relevant to the organisation's mandate.
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## Focus Area 1 Advocacy and research

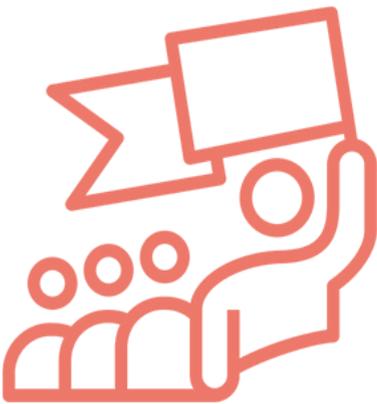


**Goal:** To be an influential voice on refugee and asylum issues.

### Actions

- 1.1 Produce quality research and policy options.
- 1.2 Advocate with and for refugees and people seeking asylum on relevant issues in Australia and internationally.
- 1.3 Promote strong cross sectoral collaborations and partnerships that are guided by refugee communities.
- 1.4 Maintain constructive and non-partisan relationships with government officials and elected representatives.

## Focus Area 2 Refugee leadership and representation



**Goal:** To actively support refugee leadership and representation.

### Actions

- 2.1 Undertake meaningful engagement and participatory processes with refugee communities and individuals.
- 2.2 Facilitate and broker opportunities for refugee voices to advocate and be heard on relevant national and international issues.
- 2.3 Broker financial support for refugee led initiatives and advocates.

## Focus Area 3 Public awareness and support for refugees



**Goal:** To increase public support, awareness, and empathy towards issues affecting refugees and people seeking asylum.

### Actions

- 3.1 Leading community education and awareness raising about refugee and asylum issues.
  - 3.2 Actively work to change the public framing of refugee and asylum issues.
  - 3.3 Build and foster relationships between refugees and broader communities.
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## Enablers to support the organisation to deliver its mission

**Goal:** To be a recognised, respected, and sustainable organisation.

### Actions



4.1 Establish a strong profile and media presence to enable achievement of organisational goals.

4.2 Maintain a strong financial position to increase income, based on a diverse fundraising strategy and membership support to meet the ambition of this plan.

4.3 Maintain and strengthen a responsible staff support, retention and recruitment strategy.

4.4 Maintain a skilled volunteer and student placement program.

4.5 Investigate an employment and professional development program for people of refugee and asylum seeking background.

4.6 Implement monitoring and evaluation frameworks for RCOA's work.

4.7 Continue implementing strong governance initiatives including training and development of Directors and strategic succession planning to ensure best practice in Board leadership.

## EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

RCOA is committed to monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of this strategic plan. Evaluation will be guided by the following principles:

**Participatory** Genuine participation of all relevant stakeholders in the planning and implementation of evaluation and acknowledgement of authorship of those contributing the knowledge and wisdom of lived experience.

**Empowering** Active involvement and ownership by stakeholders in all aspects of the evaluation process. Our evaluation will provide an opportunity for participants to develop skills and to learn from and make improvements to the organisation's work.

**Ethical** The purpose of the evaluation will be transparent and a genuinely informed consent obtained at all times. Evaluation will be conducted in a manner which prevents harm, maintains confidentiality and is of mutual benefit to participants and RCOA.

**Meaningful** The evaluation will be conducted for the purpose of knowledge creation and ongoing improvement of our work.

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