



**St Vincent de Paul Society**  
NATIONAL COUNCIL *good works*

ABN: 50 748 098 845

National Council of Australia Inc  
Units 4-5  
22 Thesiger Court  
Deakin ACT 2600  
PO Box 243  
Deakin West ACT 2600  
Telephone: (02) 6202 1200  
Facsimile: (02) 6285 0159  
Website: [www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au)

## Media Release

**22 September, 2017**

### **Rohingya crisis: St Vincent de Paul Society urges Australia to increase intake of refugees**

The St Vincent de Paul Society of Australia has urged the Australian Government to show moral leadership in its attitude to the plight of Rohingya refugees affected by the latest violence in Myanmar and to all people seeking refuge.

“While the Society welcomes the recent announcement by Foreign Minister Julie Bishop of further humanitarian funding, the exodus from Myanmar’s Rakhine state highlights the urgent need to change the direction of Australia’s asylum seeker policy,” said Dr John Falzon, Chief Executive of the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council.

“Wealthy nations such as Australia have a moral obligation to do more to respond to the violence against the Rohingya by increasing our refugee intake and resuming the timely processing of asylum seeker applications from refugees stranded in Indonesia and Malaysia, many of whom are Rohingya.

The calls come following the UN General Assembly meeting this week negotiating the terms of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration. The Society welcomed the 2016 New York declaration where world leaders committed to increasing their refugee intake and developing more humane and collective responses to refugees globally.

Dr Falzon noted the policies of successive Australian governments have exacerbated the dangers and difficulties faced by displaced peoples in our region, many of whom are Rohingya.

“Since 2014, Australia has only resettled a handful of Rohingya and has refused to resettle refugees in Indonesia and Malaysia. This has placed pressure on transit countries and contributed to growing numbers of people being stranded on a long-term basis, with limited prospects for resettlement.

“We continue to call for the resettlement of people still held in Nauru and Manus Island. In the case of Manus Island this is particularly urgent given the callous and inexplicably cruel plans to close the detention centre by October 31, leaving many destitute.”

The Society also voiced concerns about the financial incentives that the Australian Government are offering to Rohingya refugees on Manus Island to return to Myanmar.

“The tragic consequence of Australia’s policy to turn back boats, replicated by nearby countries, is now leaving people with literally nowhere to go. The boats haven’t stopped – they’ve just been turned away to other dangers,” Dr Falzon said.

**MEDIA CONTACT: 0400 845 492 or (02) 6202 1200**