



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office



23 September 2016

Media Statement from Bishop Vincent Long ofm conv, Australian Catholic Bishops Delegate for Refugees

“The announcement by Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, at the *Leaders’ Summit on Refugees* in New York, that Australia will maintain its humanitarian refugee intake at 18,750 from mid-2018 is to be welcomed.”

“Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican Secretary of State, who also attended the summit, reminded those present that, *‘The primary cause of today’s refugee and migrant crisis is man-made: namely, wars and conflicts.’*”

“The solution to the refugee crisis is not simply accepting refugees who are fleeing their country, but promoting peace in their homes so that they do not have to leave in the first place.”

“To this end, we are encouraged by the Prime Minister’s pledge in providing an additional 130 million dollars in support of peace building and assistance to refugees.”

“Australia, which has had a long tradition of welcoming and resettling refugees throughout its history, can be more generous and humane towards asylum seekers and refugees.”

“The government’s harsh policy of indefinite offshore detention, which has been declared illegal by Papua New Guinea’s High Court, betrays this tradition. It has caused immense suffering to the asylum seekers and damaged Australia’s reputation internationally.”

“Therefore, we appeal to the government and all political leaders to quickly bring to an end the inhumane and costly treatment of asylum seekers in offshore detention centres.”

“In the light of the global refugee crisis, Australia can only claim to be a model and responsible world citizen by a more generous, non-discriminatory and balanced immigration policy –one which accords with the capacity of our nation and the best natures of all Australians. The government’s present immigration policy is far from being a model for other nations.”

Bishop Vincent Long is the Australian Catholic Bishops spokesman on refugees and a former refugee himself.

**For media enquiries, please contact Aoife Connors on 0450 348 597 or
media@catholic.org.au**