



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For immediate release 28 February 2013**

### **ASYLUM SEEKERS DESERVE HUMANE TREATMENT**

Australian Quakers are deeply concerned at the tone of recent public statements of the Federal Government and Opposition about asylum seekers who arrive by boat.

The emphasis on border protection and people smuggling diverts attention from the very real human suffering and needs of people who are in desperate situations. It also ignores the evidence of ill-treatment of those sent to off-shore detention centres.

Quakers believe that Australia can do much better in its response to asylum seekers, the Presiding Clerk of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia, Julian Robertson, said today. 'We regard Australians as capable of more compassion and support for people who have been through trauma and danger. Our political leaders should be willing to reinforce this with policies that are just and fair.'

He continued: 'The fact that the UNHCR and many human rights groups have spoken out about Australia's approach as in conflict with our obligations under the Refugee Convention is a further cause for concern. As a member of the UN Security Council, Australia should be upholding international standards of conduct rather than adopting a narrow interpretation of its responsibilities.'

Australian Quakers support the ongoing concern of the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce to commit 'to care for, walk with and speak out for those who come in need'.

Quakers will continue to offer practical assistance to asylum seekers and refugees. At the same time they call upon the Government and Opposition to reconsider their policies with a view to ensuring fair and humane treatment for vulnerable people seeking our help.

### **Contacts: Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia**

Julian Robertson, Presiding Clerk, 0428 572 736

#### **Australia Yearly Meeting**

The Religious Society of Friends  
(Quakers) in Australia Inc.  
Incorporated in the ACT  
PO Box 556 Kenmore  
Queensland 4069  
Australia

Tel (07) 3201 2685

Email [ymsecretary@quakers.org.au](mailto:ymsecretary@quakers.org.au)

Web [www.quakers.org.au](http://www.quakers.org.au)

ABN 16 036 715 933