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| L4R newsletter - keeping you informed and up to date on our current issues and challenges. | Is this email not displaying correctly?[View it in your browser](https://mailchi.mp/35d8f39ba479/madeline-gleeson-at-our-annual-general-meeting?e=f705cf268c).  |

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| Labor for Refugees New South Wales |

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| **15 August 2022****Dear****ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING****Join us for our AGM on Wednesday 24 August @ 6.30pm to be held online.****Special Guest:  Madeline Gleeson, *Senior Research Fellow, Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, UNSW Law*****Madeline will give a presentation on the “International Implications of Australia's Asylum Policies” which will be followed by our Annual General Meeting.****In case you are not aware of the excellent work carried out by the Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, it's the world's leading research centre dedicated to the study of international refugee law. It undertakes rigorous research on the most pressing displacement issues in Australia, the Asia-Pacific region and around the world and contributes to public policy by promoting legal, sustainable and humane solutions to forced migration. The Kaldor Centre has become recognised as an intellectual powerhouse with global impact.Monthly newsletters from the Kaldor Centre keep us informed. For example their recent newsletter provides statistics re detention periods as follows.*****A Department of Home Affairs brief to the incoming government, released under freedom of information on 1 August, revealed that the average time spent in detention is 726 days. It also warned that 'the proportion of high-risk detainees in immigration detention has increased'. At the end of April there were 1,414 people detained in the immigration network of 12 detention centres, 61% of whom are there due to visa cancellations and 14% of whom are 'unauthorised maritime arrivals'.**Documents reveal that asylum seekers in the Nauru offshore detention centre who had contact with Australian journalists, lawyers and advocates were under surveillance by private security companies hired by the previous Coalition government.*****The link to The Guardian article is:**[**https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/aug/06/coalition-used-private-contractor-to-collect-intelligence-on-nauru-asylum-seekers?mc\_cid=89b6355c5c&mc\_eid=05cce698ba**](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/aug/06/coalition-used-private-contractor-to-collect-intelligence-on-nauru-asylum-seekers?mc_cid=89b6355c5c&mc_eid=05cce698ba) **Election of Office BearersIf you are interested in standing for any of the positions on the NSW Executive, please send your Expression of Interest by email to the Returning Officer, Chris Haviland at**chrishav2001@yahoo.com.au**You can nominate for one of the following positions.****Co-Convenors (2)Snr Vice PresidentJnr Vice President (2)Treasurer & Social MediaSecretaryAssistant Secretary & WebmasterReturning Officer The deadline for Expressions of Interest is Monday August 22 at 6.30pm.The link to the minutes of our previous AGM is**[*L4RMinutes26May21*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=68be5768d9&e=f705cf268c)**The link to last month's meeting is**[*L4RMinutes27Jul22*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=f68da72237&e=f705cf268c)  **Speeches in Parliament about refugees****There have been many speeches recently made in Parliament about asylum seekers – from at least seven independents and five Labor MPs.   I have provided the link to the Minister for Immigration, Andrew Giles' speech, where he commits to putting Labor's refugee policies in the ALP Platform, into practice**[*GilesAsylumSeekersSpeech3Aug22*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=362e32615f&e=f705cf268c)**When L4R meets with the Minister, we will present him with our refugee priorities and also attempt to establish timelines for the implementation of Labor's refugee policies.****We are aware that many refugees and people seeking asylum are anxiously waiting for the new Labor government to make its refugee policies a reality.**  **Event - Open Friends Circle****On Saturday afternoon (30 July 2022), a friendly and informative meeting took place in Lakemba Library. Open Friends Circle Australia, an active organisation of refugees and asylum seekers from Bangladesh, had invited refugee advocates, community leaders, and local Councillors for an exchange of ideas and to celebrate both the foundation of Open Friends Circle Australia and the success of Councillors they had supported. After rousing renditions of the national anthems of Australia and Bangladesh, the lively MC introduced some refugee advocates from Labor for Refugees and the Refugee Action Coalitionand some refugees who each spoke about their experiences and their hopes for the future, particularly now with a new government in place. Through Open Friends Circle, people offer each other vital support in areas such as accommodation and employment, and they also offer the all-important psychological and social support a good family provides. A short video gave a snapshot of activities, which included broader community engagement too, such as giving people food during Covid lockdowns and handing out election material at the local government election in 2021. Much was rightly made of the deprivations suffered by many during the Covid lockdowns – separation from family, inability to attend funerals, weddings, and other important life events, and the depression arising from uncertainty and loneliness. These young men have endured eight or nine years like this, which itself followed the trauma of persecution and escape from the country of their birth. It was humbling to realise that they had learnt English from scratch and had had to acclimatise to a very different and sometimes hostile culture, but then how hard they were working still and how keen they were to be able to settle down and feel they really belonged in Australia. Not to be able to see their families again – the pain of that separation! Nine years of uncertainty and insecurity is unjust and cruel. Some had terrible challenges like not being allowed, or not being able, to work and not having access to Medicare, basically not having a visa with any rights. For these people in particular the Open Friends Circle Australia plays a key role. The guests were made very welcome indeed and had the opportunity to meet and chat with their hosts.  L4R Secretary Nizza Siano thanked members of this group for their hospitality and committed L4R to continue making demands of the government, until the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum are prioritized and addressed as a matter of urgency.**  **The afternoon wrapped up with a delicious Bangladeshi biryani, cooked by members of the Circle.  Warm hospitality is clearly another strong value in this community!Regards****Nizza SianoSecretary L4R NSWemail:***contact@labor4refugees.com*

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