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| Labor for Refugees New South Wales |

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| **21 February 2024****Happy New Year!****We hope everyone had a decent break over the festive season. Your L4R executive did not stop working over that period and kept lobbying Ministers.   See the letters we sent later on in our newsletter.You are invited to attend our meeting next WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 6.30PM.**  **Please join Labor for Refugees to receive the Zoom link for our meeting****The Minutes of our last meeting follow**[*MinutesL4RNSW-ACT22Nov23*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=7ab1396b6f&e=f705cf268c)**Congratulations!On Australia Day last month, our L4R NSW/ACT Senior Vice-President, Dr Sabrin Farooqui, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).    It was for her contribution to multicultural Australian society.  As far as is known, she is the first Bangladeshi-Australian woman to receive an OAM.  A person wearing a head scarf  Description automatically generated****We are all so proud of Sabrin because we know how hard she works for her community, not only as a Labor Councillor in Cumberland Council, but also as the founder and President of an organistion called Cultural Diversity Network Inc (CDNI).  This is an independent, not-for-profit organistion committed to helping migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who want to settle and thrive in Australia.  CDNI runs fantastic training programs which you can see on the CDNI website**[Cultural Diversity Network Inc](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=e81a7264c6&e=f705cf268c)**Sabrin was one of the first person in Australia, to push for the recognition of coercive control before it became a well known issue in the community..In addition to all this, Sabrin works full time and has a teenage son.****You might like to support Sabrin's work by becoming a CDNI member**[**https://cdni.org.au/join-us/**](https://cdni.org.au/join-us/)  **International Implications of Australia's Asylum PoliciesPresentation by Madeline Gleeson - Wednesday 20 March at 7pm****Kaldor Centre’s Madeline Gleeson has been invited by the ACT Labor’s International Affairs Committee/Immigration Policy Sub-Committee, to address the group by Zoom at 7pm on Wednesday 20 March 2024.  The main purpose of this event,  is to provide an update on the international/global refugee/displaced persons situation and where Australia fits within that worsening context. The group would like to invite all L4R NSW/ACT members (and L4R groups from other states) to attend.****A link will be sent to you after you have RSVP-ed your intention to attend.**[*LeafletACTLaborMbrs&L4RMbrsMadelineGleeson20Mar24*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=a278b93d24&e=f705cf268c)

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| **Help sought for Afghans****On 27 November 2023, Labor for Refugees wrote to both the Immigration Minister Andrew Giles and Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong.  We expressed our concern for the Afghan nationals who at that time, were being expelled from Pakistan and were in fear of being forced back to Afghanistan.  For more details, please read our letter**[*L4RletterAfghanstoGiles27Nov23*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=e965aad06b&e=f705cf268c)**No response has been received to date from either Ministers.****Concern re the Migration Amendment (Bridging Visa Conditions) Act 1923 (the Amendment Act)Labor for Refugees sent a letter on the 27 November 2023, to the Minister for Home Affairs Clare O'Neil and Minister for Immigration Andrew Giles, expressing our dismay at this Amendment Act which passed in Parliament on the 16 November last year. We believed that this Act was an overreaction pandering to the populist fear-mongering and demonisation favoured by the Opposition.  Our reasons for concerns are outlined in our letter which can be read at**[*L4RlettertoO'Neil&GilesretheAmendmentAct27Nov23*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=bb9b9be623&e=f705cf268c)**We have received no response from either Ministers.**  |
| **Legal Aid for released detainees****We wrote to the Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus on 13 December 2023, asking him for an assurance of legal aid for recently released detainees.   At that time, $255 million had been allocated to police and law enforcers to monitor and control the 150 or so non-citizens released by the Commonwealth from illegal immigration detention.  In our letter, we speak about how this money will be used but the main purpose of our letter, was to seek the Attorney-General's assurance, that each one of them receives the full benefit of legal services.  The link to the letter follows**[*L4RlettertoA-GreLegalAid13Dec23*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=94950dccc2&e=f705cf268c) |

**A response dated 18 January 2024, was sent to Labor for Refugees.  In the letter, the Assistant Secretary of the Legal Assistance Branch, Lace Wang, expressed a commitment from the Australian Government, to ensuring people receive appropriate legal assistance, no matter how they enter the legal system.  The responding letter from the Attorney-General's Dept follows**[*L4RlettertoA-GrelegalaidresponsefromAGDept18Jan 24*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=7c4bbfeebc&e=f705cf268c)  **Meeting the Immigration Minister****We reported in our November 2023 newsletter, that Labor for Refugees has been attempting to set up a meeting with Immigration Minister Andrew Giles.  At our October meeting, L4R members discussed a number of commitments made by the Labor Government at the August 2023 ALP National Conference and wanted an update on these issues.****Every effort made, to set up a meeting since last year, failed to reap results.  We understand that the Minister has been under the pump, with attacks by the Coalition in Parliament re the refugees who were released from Indefinite Detention. More recently, attacks have been made by the Coalition about the people arriving by boat on the coast of West Australia.  These dog-whistling techniques used by the Coalition, are nothing new.   The Coalition has always used the emotive issue of refugees, to try and wedge Labor which is rich coming from the Coalition which handed over the Home Affairs/Immigration portfolios to Labor in such a mess, that it will most likely take a decade to restore them to some semblance of order. However, the needs of people seeking asylum/refugees has not disappeared and we are becoming more and more concerned that they are being neglected because the Government may not see refugees as a priority.****It appears that security and defence is trumping just about every other issue in this country.**  **We will continue to urge the Immigration Minister to meet with Labor for Refugees and will hold the Government accountable for the refugee policies it committed to implement.   Unfortunately, many of these policies, did not have a time-line for their introduction.  Just as an example, at the National Conference last year, we were lobbying the Minister for a Royal Commission into Immigration Detention.  We lost our case but instead, the Minister committed to a Parliamentary Inquiry into Immigration Detention.  That was in August last year.  We are still waiting.**  **Palm Sunday Rally****Labor for Refugees plans to attend the forthcoming Palm Sunday rally - a rally that we endorse each year.  We'll be discussing at our meeting next week, who can attend and carry our (very large) banner.  It would be great if you could join us at the rally.****The details of the rally and march follow**[*PalmSundayRally2024*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=3a4f1db9ee&e=f705cf268c)**Please promote this event.**  **Cisarua Learning Centre - Fundraising Event****Labor for Refugees has, for many years, supported and promoted the work being carried out in Indonesia, by the Cisarua Learning Centre.  Their Gala Dinner will take place on Thursday 29 February at the City Cricket Ground Function Rooms from 6.30pm to 10pm.  Please read the leaflet promoting this fundraiser and if you can't attend, consider making a donation.  The links for both options are on the leaflet**[*CisaruaLearningCentreGalaDinner29Feb24*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=c49b846536&e=f705cf268c)  **The Learning Centre is also launching its crowd funding campaign, information booklet and trailer.The community in Cisarua is showing the world that refugees are capable and committed and ready to contribute. Policy is changing and this film is going help accelerate this change!Access to information re the booklet, crowd funding and trailer follows**[*CisaruaLaunch19Feb24*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=31aa056791&e=f705cf268c)  **Asylum Seekers CentreIt's Giving Day today for the Asylum Seekers Centre (ASC) and every donation received will be doubled.  The ASC carries out a very important function in New South Wales.   Labor for Refugees has submitted donations to the Centre over the years in recognition of the crucial services it provided to refugees and people seeking asylum in this state.Please access the letter to see how you can help ASC today**[*ASCGivingDay22Feb24*](https://facebook.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=09c48b6cba9909c3558998ce0&id=dbff3d515e&e=f705cf268c)

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| **Regards****Nizza SianoSecretary L4R NSWemail:***contact@labor4refugees.com* |
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