



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Partnership brings dignity to people seeking asylum**

The Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS) and the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW (Vinnies) are working in partnership to support people who arrived in New South Wales after fleeing persecution overseas and do not currently have access to the assistance they need to resolve their immigration status.

Under this joint initiative, lawyers from RACS' Justice for Refugees program will provide judicial review referral assistance to people who have had a negative Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA) decision or a Department of Immigration decision refusing to grant them a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) and excluding them from review in the Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA).

At the same time, the Vinnies Asylum Seeker Program will provide people going through this judicial review process with financial and casework support to make sure they can meet their daily needs and live in dignity until their immigration status is resolved.

The Justice for Refugees program has built a network of barristers and law firms who provide opinions on prospects of success on an application for judicial review and, if there are prospects, representation in the Federal Circuit Court on a pro bono or no win no fee basis where appropriate.

Vinnies NSW CEO Jack de Groot said: "Successive changes to the Migration Act along with cuts to legal and translation support services have left us with an unjust system for those seeking refuge and safety in Australia. It is impossible for people who are seeking asylum to navigate this legal process on their own.

"RACS and Vinnies realised that the punitive approach taken by the Government was preventing people who are seeking asylum from not only accessing a fair process, but also from being able to meet their most basic human needs. Many of the people seeking our help are left in limbo until their immigration status is sorted and, in the meantime, survive only because of family, friends and community support.

"The Vinnies Asylum Seeker Program provides case management, financial assistance and wrap-around support to people seeking asylum who may be at risk of homelessness as they have no form of income and have minimal support options available to them."

Tanya Jackson-Vaughan RACS' Executive Director welcomes the partnership. "The type of support Vinnies is providing people going through the judicial review process is much needed. RACS' lawyers are relieved to know that people who are facing their last chance at justice will be fed and housed when they are at their most vulnerable."

Together, RACS and Vinnies will be a stronger voice for refugees.

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