



SUBMISSION

RURAL AUSTRALIANS FOR REFUGEES QUEANBEYAN Inc.

To

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights

An Australian Bill of Rights

The concept of an Australian Bill of Rights was endorsed as policy for RAR at the national conference of Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) in April 2017 at Wodonga NSW at a National meeting of the collective groups. That meeting produced the Wodonga Declaration which put forward the following:

“There is an urgent need for an Australian Charter of Human Rights which recognises that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. We call for the Parliament of Australia to meet, protect and uphold our legal and moral obligations under the international Human Rights Convention and law. We commit to work together as one, until this is achieved.”

Professor Gillian Triggs (currently [Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations](#)) advised RAR that the impact an Australian Charter of Human Rights will have on refugees and asylum seekers is:

- The prohibition of arbitrary detention, that is, stop the Australian Government from detaining people indefinitely without charge or trial. (Established with Magna Carta.)
- Provide a right to citizenship for children who are born in Australia.
- Recognise the right of children and families through the reunification of families.

During her address to the Annual Conference of Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) in Wodonga on Friday evening, 6 April, Honourary RAR Patron, Professor Triggs called for an Australian Bill of Rights, which was supported by then Honourary Patron for RAR Julian Burnside, AO QC, highly regarded long-term advocate for asylum seekers and refugees.

RAR Queanbeyan Inc. wishes to endorse Dr Triggs proposal for an Australian Bill of Rights and submits to the Parliamentary Committee that the following four principal points which could initiate discussion on this matter are these from the New Zealand Bill of Rights:

- The right to life and liberty
- Freedom of expression
- Equality before the law
- The right to be free from discrimination

RAR Queanbeyan Inc. also endorses the example of an Australian Bill of Rights put forward as Legislation to the Australian Parliament in 2017 by Andrew Wilkie MP. It can be viewed in full at: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017B00161>

Members of RARQ are prepared to speak at public hearings should the Committee request our presence.

Gerry Gillespie

President
Rural Australians for Refugees Queanbeyan
April 1st 2023

