

Palm Sunday actions for Justice for Refugees across Australia

14 April 2019

2019 Palm Sunday Rallies called for Peace, Justice for Refugees and A Fair Go for All

Huge crowds rally across the nation. Australians gathered in capital cities, with around ten thousand in Melbourne (10k), Sydney (3k), and Canberra (4k), plus hundreds in other capitals and regional centres.

Over 200 organisations endorsed the Palm Sunday “Walk for Justice for Refugees” rallies, and many well-known Australians, included Craig Foster, Nyadol Nyuon, Richard Flanagan and David Manne, and added their voices to the call for decency, compassion and fairness.

A number of church services were held immediately prior, with large groups joining in the rallies. Many faith groups were all represented at the rallies, including, Jewish, Muslim and Christian faith communities. In Melbourne an interfaith panel welcomed the crowd, following the Welcome to Country by local elder Uncle Colin Hunter.

The Christchurch massacre was remembered with sorrow and demands for an end to the hate speech and racism that fosters division and Islamophobia.

A broad cross section of the community attended the rallies, including concerned individuals of all ages and persuasions, and large contingents from unions, school students, and faith communities.

There was a strong sense of optimism, with many speakers noting that public sentiment is shifting, and demanding more humane treatment of people seeking our protection.

In Melbourne: Speakers included faith leaders, Behrooz Boochani (live from Manus), Richard Flanagan, Nyadol Nyuon, David Manne, Taqi Azra, Lavanya Thavaraja and Michele O’Neill (ACTU President). Some of the wonderful speeches from the Melbourne Walk for Justice for Refugees are available [here](#) and below.

Behrouz Boochani, Iranian journalist who recently won the Victorian Premier’s Award for Literature, spoke to the rally from Manus Island. “The Australian government has detained 1000 innocent people as hostages for almost six years.” Boochani also spoke about the tragedy in Christchurch. “All of us in Manus & Nauru and New Zealand and Australia have been in shock and mourning because of the terrorist attack in New Zealand... I ask the Australian people to condemn this kind of violence and the politicians and media who have contributed to this violence with their words.” “I believe that we must continue to stand up against this cruel government in any way we can.”

Video broadcast by Behrouz for Palm Sunday today:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RUfHSPgG-m4 Bx oXjBORhRnkWOq3XY /view>

<https://www.facebook.com/racvic/videos/2000878506887351/>

"This is an important day for the Australian people – the kind of violence that we saw in Christchurch in New Zealand has been happening in Manus and Nauru for years. This is the reality. There is a connection between what is happening in Manus and Nauru and what is happening in Australian politics; the Australian people must not be silent in the face of what the government is doing in Manus and Nauru."

Richard Flanagan, acclaimed author, friend of Behrooz and vocal critic of the current policies added “Every day that the asylum seekers of Nauru and Manus Island endure punishment without end,

Palm Sunday actions for Justice for Refugees across Australia

14 April 2019

guilty without crime, we too become a little less free.” Text of [Richard Flanagan’s rally speech](#) (published in the Guardian).

[Nyadol Nyuon](#), lawyer, Sundanese refugee and activist said “I stand here today as an example of what the generosity of a nation can afford someone who was once considered stateless. Refugees and asylum seekers are just like you and I - people looking for hope and the opportunity to build new lives.”

[David Manne](#), Director, Refugee Legal has a message of hope: “Today, right across our nation, thousands of others have come together – like here – to send a loud, powerful and unshakeable message to all political parties and candidates that Australians care about much more than tax cuts. And that they care deeply about justice for refugees – and want action to end the injustices. We demand a fair and compassionate society that welcomes and protects refugees <https://refugeelegal.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Palm-Sunday-Rally-Speech-2019-FINAL-ISED.pdf>

Taqi Azra <https://www.facebook.com/racvic/videos/166306254320899/>

[Lavanya Thavaraja](#)

https://www.facebook.com/racvic/videos/453323965209497/?id=199737276719439&story_fbid=274802590132685

[Michele O’Neill](#) (ACTU President) <https://www.facebook.com/racvic/videos/2349537842037163/>

The [photos from the Melbourne Palm Sunday Walk for Justice for Refugees 2019](#) can be viewed here: <http://refugeeadvocacynetwork.org/?p=1631>

Note: please allow a few minutes for photos to load. If you want a high res copy of any of these photos email info@refugeeadvocacynetwork.org.au and copy the photos you want into the email

In Sydney: Soccer legend Craig Foster said, “I’m here to speak about our treatment of asylum seekers, about Australia recovering its humanity and compassion and depoliticising the plight of vulnerable people..... Australia’s national conscience has been severely damaged by deaths on Manus Island and Nauru”

Mark Isaacs said: “Yesterday there was an unmistakable sense of optimism in the air. People were smiling. The chants were strong and defiant. The people can feel the tide turning against cruelty and towards justice.”

In Canberra over 4000 have gathered. **Video clip from Canberra Rally** [here](#)

In **Regional Australia:**

Palm Sunday actions were held in

- Waterside walks featured from Cairns to Lennox Head.
- In Alice Springs, artists engaged the community in creating a flotilla of wooden boats in the main street.
- In Bendigo Community members and Church goers joined with local human rights groups to celebrate the success stories of refugees in Bendigo: stories of safety, of welcome and integration, of refugees who have brought cultural and economic benefits.
- In Newcastle musician Farhad Bandesh spoke from Manus.

Palm Sunday actions for Justice for Refugees across Australia

14 April 2019

Adelaide: 2pm. **I CHOOSE HUMANE.**
Alice Springs, **Safe Harbour Community Art Launch**
Armidale **Walk for Justice for Refugees.**
Ballina Lennox Head: **Ballina Region for Refugees Palm Sunday Rally**
Bendigo: **Justice for Refugees Vigil**
Brisbane: **Palm Sunday Rally for Peace and Refugees**
Cairns: **Walk For Justice For Refugees – People Just Like us**
Canberra: **Enough is Enough: Palm Sunday 2019 Rally for Refugees**
Forster **Justice for Refugees rally**
Hobart: 2-4pm. **Refugee Rights on Palm Sunday**
Launceston: 12.30pm-2.30pm. **Walk for Refugee Justice**
Melbourne: 2-5pm. **Walk for Justice for Refugees**
Newcastle: 12-2pm. **Newcastle Says Yes To Refugees Palm Sunday**
Perth: 1-3pm. **Palm Sunday Walk for Justice for Refugees 2019**
Sydney: 2-4pm. **Say Yes to Refugees**
Townsville: 4-6pm. **Palm Sunday Walk for Justice for Refugees**
Whyalla: 2:30-3:30pm. **Compassion and Justice for Refugees**
Wollongong: **Wollongong Palm Sunday rally for refugees!**
Yass. **Stand with Us on Palm Sunday**

For MORE DETAIL AND PHOTOS: **GO TO THE ARAN (Australian Refugee Action Network) website**

<https://australianrefugeeactionnetwork.wordpress.com/palm-sunday/>

Links to the TV news clips and other media on Palm Sunday:

Palm Sunday item begins 5.30 minutes into the clip SBS

<https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/1468728387507/sbs-world-news-14-april>

Watching ABC News VIC Sunday 14/4/2019 in iview: <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/abc-news-vic/series/0/video/NU1931V015S00>

Channel 9

<https://www.facebook.com/1669623313301323/posts/2257516904511958/>

Channel 7

<https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSsydney/videos/vb.108878629136279/1276093205877370/?type=2&theater>

Fairfax metro and local - <https://www.smh.com.au/national/thousands-take-part-in-palm-sunday-rallies-to-support-refugees-20190414-p51e3x.html?cspt=1555272750|624e74d4e4071cd5ea692c9ce0934750>

Fairfax metro dailies - <https://www.theage.com.au/national/queensland/close-the-torture-camps-hundreds-march-in-palm-sunday-rally-20190414-p51e1u.html?cspt=1555272815|0f244ee0d7d648be3f3d7172c6861bc0>

Palm Sunday actions for Justice for Refugees across Australia

14 April 2019

AAP Newswire - <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/national-rallies-to-bring-refugees-to-aust>

AAP Newswire - <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/thousands-gather-across-australia-for-palm-sunday-refugee-rallies>

Illawarra Mercury - <https://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/6043347/hundreds-say-yes-to-refugees-at-wollongongs-palm-sunday-rally/>

Newscorp metro dailies - <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/national/cairns-refugee-advocates-call-for-change-in-walk-for-justice-on-esplanade/news-story/4cce77ce6f5df37634c90e80278c42b8?btr=c47abeae4a42f5205a1fba850521c926>

Sky News - <https://www.skynews.com.au/details/6026080699001>

[Local committee shows their support for refugees](#) (Great Lakes Advocate)

[Thousands Rally To Support Refugees In Palm Sunday Demonstrations](#) (10 Daily)

[Palm Sunday rally says “yes” to refugees](#) (*Honi Soit* – University of Sydney)

[Thousands rally to support refugees](#) (Canberra Times)

[Thousands take part in Palm Sunday rallies to support refugees](#) (SMH)

[National rallies to bring refugees to Aust](#) (SBS News)

[‘Close the torture camps’: Hundreds march in Palm Sunday rally](#) (The Age)

[Cairns refugee advocates call for change in Walk for Justice on Esplanade](#) (Cairns Post)

[Annual Palm Sunday rally calls for refugee policy reform](#) (SkyNews)

[Thousands to rally to bring refugees to Australia](#) (9News)

[Hundreds say yes to refugees at Wollongong’s Palm Sunday rally](#) (Illawarra Mercury)

[Thousands gather across Australia for Palm Sunday refugee rallies](#) (SBS News)

[Recognising the other on Palm Sunday \(UCA\)](#)

[Palm Sunday Refugee Rally](#) (Eureka Street)

[Nauru and Manus condemned at Armidale Rally in Central Park](#) (Armidale Express)