



NEWSLETTER June 2020

www.grandmothersforrefugees.org



World Refugee Day
20 June

SPECIAL EDITION

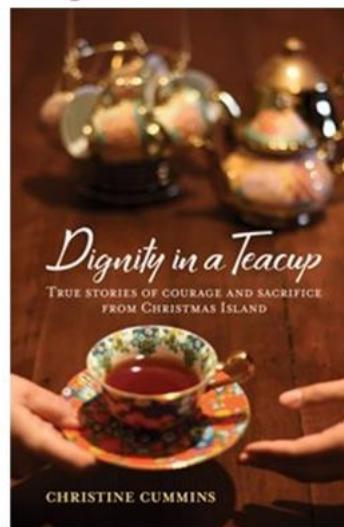
Afternoon Tea with Grandmothers and Friends – Reading the Lives of Refugees

World Refugee Day, Saturday 20 June, 2-4pm

A Live Event on Zoom
hosted by
Grandmothers for Refugees

Invite your family and friends to join you for Afternoon Tea,
hear the stories and join the discussion afterwards with
author Christine Cummins.

www.grandmothersforrefugees.org



2020 is the Year of Welcome

When we welcome people into our homes, we usually offer tea. We sit together, get to know each other.

Grandmothers for Refugees invite you to welcome refugees by hearing what they shared with Christine Cummins as told in her book, *Dignity in a Teacup: true stories of courage and sacrifice from Christmas Island*.

Published 2019 by Arcadia. Book available at <https://scholarly.info/book/dignity-in-a-teacup-true-stories-of-courage-and-sacrifice-from-christmas-island/>

To join this event: (1) download Zoom to your laptop, computer or iPad. (2) Click on this link.
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/6410570613?pwd=YU5TVnM4cWZVUXVadnBabzdBbENVUT09>

If you are asked to do so, insert the Meeting ID: **641 057 0613** and then the Password: **998770**

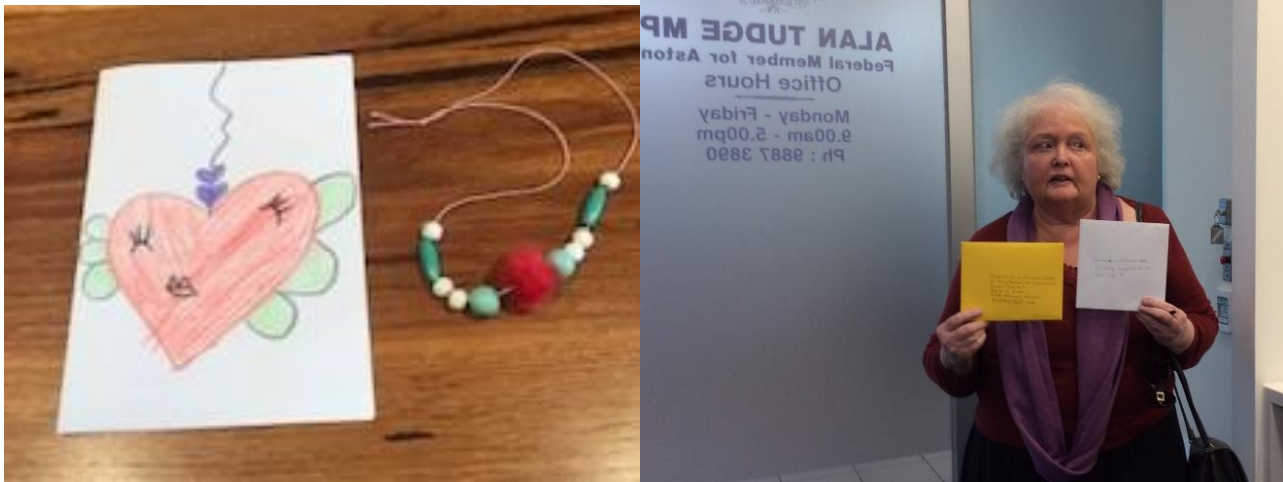
Dear Grandmothers and Friends,

All of us have heard and responded to the tragedy of refugee lives. Sometimes, for our own well-being, we feel the need to stop, when just one more tragic story might break us.

In deciding to mark World Refugee Day by reading and listening to the real stories of refugees, we acknowledge their truth. We do it because our government won't listen to the truth of their fears, to their need to flee, to their hurts and sorrows. In listening we say: *We want to know you. You are welcome here.* - Jean

Visit our website today www.grandmothersforrefugees.org

Thank you to all those who responded to the call and sent a birthday card to Tharunicaa for her third birthday on the 12th June. When the grandchildren join in by making their own cards, it is especially heart-warming.



Above left: Gretel's card for Tharunicaa. Above right: Val Mayer (Casey) makes a personal card delivery to Tharunicaa on Christmas Island c/- Acting Immigration Minister Alan Tudge.

Below: Bendigo Grans maintain good spatial distances while making their card deliver via Australia Post.



Thank you for the many photos of birthday cards and Grandmothers posting birthday cards. They were wonderful images and I posted at least one on Twitter every day in the lead up to Therunicaa's birthday today... 22 in all. All were viewed many times (thousands in some instances), retweeted and 'liked'. The daily tweeting brought us over forty new followers – thus enhancing our influence for future actions...

Please take and send photos as we move into Refugee Week – so we can continue the momentum! Again, many thanks! - Linda S



Tie a purple ribbon....

We've had a good suggestion come in from an active member who wants to remind her local community **2020 is the Year of Welcome** for refugees. So, she suggests we tie a ribbon and card saying '**We remember refugees**' to your front gate or fence. An addition to this idea is to wrap a (very) large ribbon around a tree or lamp post near your home, with a sign to remind neighbours that '**Refugees are welcome here**'.

You can join this simple effort. Use crepe paper, or a good length of cheap tulle from Spotlight. Make your message – big letters on cardboard. Tie your ribbon and message to the fence, tree or post. Finally, take a photo – with your neighbours in the pic too if they like. Post your pic to social media or send it to us at info@grandmothersforrefugees.org . We'll post it on our website.

Casey Grandmothers will protest at electorate office of Acting Immigration Minister, Alan Tudge, MP on **Wednesday 17 June during Refugee Week**. Contact your Coordinator to find out what other local activities are planned.

This is the week...

Your local Federal MP should be in no doubt that refugees ought to be on their minds this week. Grandmothers and Frogs are asked to make a special effort to call or visit your MP during Refugee Week.

Tell them THIS IS THE YEAR OF WELCOME – THIS IS THE YEAR FOR CHANGE.

Some key points to make in your messages:

- * We can give protection to people who need safety
- * We can support refugees in the community while their claims are resolved
- * We can give permanent visas and allow people to become the productive Australian citizens they wish to be
- * We can change the policies now

A DAY BY DAY LISTING OF EVENTS around the Australian Refugee Advocacy Network (ARAN)

SUNDAY 14 June

6.15pm [On 'Welcome': Migration, First Nations and Refugee Communities](#): for the **official Refugee Week 2020 launch**, panelists from first nations and refugee communities take a deep dive into the meaning of 'welcome' and the intersections of indigenous and refugee rights. Hosted in collaboration with the Wheeler Centre.

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm Newcastle Amnesty: Opposite sides of the fence – Zaki and Zac
Don't miss this unique opportunity to hear from both sides of the immigration detention fence, as Amnesty International hosts an online conversation between Zaki Haidari (asylum seeker and RACS – Refugee Advice and Casework Service Ambassador) and Z T Quinn

(former Manus Island Support Worker and author of Sanlundia). Broadcast on Zoom and YouTube Live. Other speakers to be announced. Zoom Meeting <https://amnestyau.zoom.us/j/92260289745> or livestreamed to Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/897789927363379/>

MONDAY 15 June 6.15pm,

[Words Without Borders](#): an evening of spoken word and poetry performed by members of Australia's Refugee communities, in collaboration with The Wheeler Centre.

TUESDAY 16 June 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Amnesty online event: In Conversation with Ali.

Discussing how people with refugee backgrounds are making our neighbourhoods that much brighter, especially during the past few months!

RSVP here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScPKxA6AFsvK7hnEFb2_Hkn6pHNFbtHbVbdWgOZDMuYmv1eiw/viewform

WEDNESDAY 17 June

12-1pm Forum on Strategic Regional Welcoming

<https://events.humanitix.com/refugee-week-celebrating-the-year-of-welcome-online-sessions>.

12noon [Voices from the front line: Refugee women and COVID-19](#): Refugee and asylum seeking women and leaders of frontline services share their experiences of life during the COVID-19 pandemic.

6-7pm [Global storytelling night](#), in partnership with Refugee Week UK. Join four amazing people from around the world as they share their stories of 'welcome' and 'imagination', based on this year's themes. MC'ed by the awesome Mariam Issa.

THURSDAY 18 June

1pm [Foundations for Belonging](#): Join ABC's Lydia Feng in conversation with Shanthi Robertson (Western Sydney University), Dor Achiek (Settlement Services International) and Shukufa Tahiri (Refugee Council of Australia) for this special Australia at Home event.*

4pm UNHCR – World Refugee Day online event \$60

[In-Depth Conversation](#): Join Cate Blanchett in conversation with Australia for UNHCR Special Representative Marta Dusseldorp - – two powerful advocates for refugees. [Book on Humanitix](#).

FRIDAY 19 June

Celebrating Women Refugees & Resilience

<https://events.humanitix.com/refugee-week-celebrating-the-year-of-welcome-online-sessions>

7.30pm [For Sama](#): Tune in for this special screening of Oscar-nominated and multi-award winning film [For Sama](#). In partnership with the Human Rights Arts and Film Festival.



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SATURDAY 20 June

1-2pm ARAN Online Forum – IMAGINING A MORE WELCOMING AUSTRALIA Join this discussion with special guests including Angela Fredericks ([Back to Biloela](#) campaigner) and [Najeeba Wazefadost](#) founder of Asia Pacific Network of Refugees, and Gender

Advocate Settlement Services International. Moz will join the forum from the Mantra. Also Corinne Grant and Tom Ballard. This forum is hosted by the Australian Refugee Action Network (ARAN). Join us to imagine a more welcoming Australia. Zoom link: [ARAN online Forum - Imagining a more Welcoming Australia](#) Meeting ID: 941 8188 576 Enquiries: austrefugeenetwork@gmail.com

2-4pm Afternoon Tea with Grandmothers and Friends – Reading the Lives of Refugees (online). Invite your family and friends to join you for Afternoon Tea, hear the stories and join the discussion afterwards with author Christine Cummins. When we welcome people into our homes, we usually offer tea. We sit together, get to know each other. Grandmothers for Refugees invite you to welcome refugees by hearing what they shared with Christine Cummins as told in her book, *Dignity in a Teacup: True stories of courage and sacrifice from Christmas Island*.

Hosted by Grandmothers for Refugees. [Click on this link](#) to join anytime until 4pm.

Also: STARTTS annual Humanitarian Awards, to celebrate World Refugee Day and wrap up Refugee Week.

There's more Refugee Week information on the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) [Refugee Week website](#), including all of the 2020 resources, including posters, resource packs and more. You can also read about our incredible ambassadors and much more. Click [here](#) to receive a daily update during Refugee Week, to let you know what's happening every day and share with people who might be interested.

Taking our case to the 46th Parliament: Two Submissions in defence of refugees

Refugees suffering under Covid-19

Earlier this month, the Executive lodged a submission to the Senate Select Committee on Covid-19 impacts.

Summary concern

Our concerns relate to failures by Government during the pandemic to address the health and income security risks to refugees and people seeking asylum - a highly vulnerable segment of people for whom Government (and its agents) has a duty of care.... The Covid-19 Response has not been inclusive. It has established zones of exclusion on the arbitrary basis that 'a line had to be drawn somewhere'. When that line is drawn so that highly vulnerable people for whom the Federal Government has a duty of care are excluded from the protections and community safety goals of the response measures, the Covid-19 Response must be deemed fundamentally flawed.

You can read our full submission on Covid-19 impacts (No 94) here

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/COVID-19/COVID19/Submissions . Further submissions have been made by Rural Australians for Refugees (No 101); Combined Refugee Action Group (No 108) and Refugee Advice and Casework Service (No 68).

Opposing the 'mobile phone prohibition amendment'

Grandmothers have also made a formal submission against an amendment to the Migration Act which would allow the confiscation of mobile phones from refugees in detention, cutting already tenuous lifelines to the outside world. Watch for it and other submissions to be posted here

In brief...

- ✓ Grandmothers have been more than usually successful in getting their letters in to the media in recent weeks.
- ✓ Some groups are making themselves visible on the streets again in our signature purple.
- ✓ We have had new banners made in readiness for the return to public advocacy and protest. If your group would like to buy a banner for \$110, please contact the Executive at info@grandmothersforrefugees.org



Finally...

To wish you a “happy” Refugee Week would be bizarre. However, we do wish you an “active Refugee Week”. We trust you will find in this newsletter an action you can take next week, no matter how small. We especially hope that you and friends will join us for our virtual Afternoon Tea, reading and discussion with author Christine Cummins on Saturday 20 June from 2-4pm.

Until then, best wishes to all.

From the Executive and Planning Committee

PS. Please stay connected by making sure our email address is in your address book. info@grandmothersforrefugees.org . Visit our website where we update news regularly. Put www.grandmothersforrefugees.org into your search engine and save us to your favorites. And you can use the Contact Us page links on the website to follow us on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.