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Kooyong Independent candidate calls for increase in refugee intake

The Independent candidate for Kooyong, Dr Monique Ryan, has called for a 50 per cent increase in intake to Australia's refugee and humanitarian program.

"Australia is a generous country which has always welcomed refugees," Dr Ryan said.

"Since WWII, Australia has settled more than 850,000 people fleeing from persecution, torture, and war. These individuals have made Australia home, and their contribution has benefited all of us."

"Australia has one of the best settlement programs in the world and has demonstrated its capacity to welcome large numbers of people in times of crisis. Currently we accept nearly 14,000 people annually. There is no reason why that can't be increased to 21,000.

"We also need to ensure that all people granted refugee status by the Australian government are given a permanent home in Australia, to provide the stability they need to fully integrate into the social and economic life of our country.

"There are nearly 30,000 refugees on Temporary Protection Visas (TPV) living and working in the community. These are people who have fled war and persecution. They live in limbo because they must reapply for a TPV every three years. They are not allowed to apply for family reunions, and they cannot risk returning to visit their homelands.

"Australians will not stand for the deprivation of liberty of refugees and asylum seekers held in indefinite immigration detention. The government policies which enforce that, as well as perpetuating family separation and insecurity, are unnecessarily cruel.

"A respected MP for Kooyong, Petro Georgiou (1994-2010), took a principled stand on behalf of refugees in crossing the floor to oppose offshore detention. This issue remains very important to many members of the Kooyong community, who are disappointed with the lack of leadership and integrity on this matter shown by the current government.

"As a nation, we are better than this," Dr Ryan concluded.

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