



## MEDIA RELEASE

Media Release

Date of Issue: 17/12/2018

### **Labor commitment of \$500 million to UNHCR a welcome announcement for world's most vulnerable**

Micah Australia has today welcomed the announcement that a Labor Government would commit \$500 million over five years to the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

“With an unprecedented 68.5 million displaced people around the world, this is a very welcome announcement and one that was advocated for by Micah delegates during our Voices for Justice Conference in Canberra two weeks ago,” said Tim Costello, Executive Director of Micah Australia.

“This funding is in line with our values as a compassionate nation and will contribute to giving people waiting to find safety the support that they need during their wait.”

Over five years, the funding would help make sure regional processing and resettlement is implemented in an orderly and structured way through the UNHCR – by building capacity such as boosting staff, facilities and training throughout the region.

The announcement during the ALP Conference comes on the back of an additional \$30 million to address the humanitarian crises in the Palestinian Territories, Myanmar and Bangladesh, and a commitment to reform the Community Sponsored Refugee Program from 10,000, to 5,000 refugees to resettle in Australia annually.

Micah Australia's Voices for Justice, held in Canberra two weeks ago, saw over 200 Christians from across the nation meet with 94 politicians to advocate for Australia to be a leader in helping the world's extreme poor, displaced and oppressed.

“As we met with politicians from all major parties, there was strong consensus that Australia had stepped back in our responsibility to our region and beyond,” said Mr Costello.

“We are at a point as a nation where our national conscience is again being weighed in the balance. We either step up as a nation to the humanitarian challenges of our time, or we continue to turn inward.”

“Our policy ask regarding funding to the UNHCR was clear at Voices for Justice - we asked that Australia should increase its funding to the UNHCR, from \$25 million per annum to \$100 million per annum.”

“Today's announcement is a great outcome, reflecting the hard work of many advocates, including *Welcome to Australia* and others.”

Mr Costello said increasing funding to the UNHCR is not just compassionate, it is strategic, because the lack of essential services in displacement situations can add to the 'push factors' that cause asylum seekers to take dangerous boat journeys.

“We are a compassionate and generous nation, and we hope to see many more announcements over coming months that reflect the nation we want to be and have the ability to be.”

Media Contact: Beck Wilesmith | 0403 569 773 | [beck.wilesmith@micahaustralia.org](mailto:beck.wilesmith@micahaustralia.org)

Micah Australia is a coalition of churches and Christian organisations raising a powerful voice for justice and a world free from poverty.

[www.micahaustralia.org](http://www.micahaustralia.org)

