

# AMBASSADOR PACK

**I CHOOSE  
HUMANE.**

treat people  
~~seeking~~  
~~asylum~~  
like people.

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# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT?

The **Choose Humane** Campaign aims to leverage the federal election – when politicians are focused on what people care about – to show MPs and Senators across the country that there is widespread rejection of cruel policies towards people seeking asylum and support for a far more progressive and humane refugee policy.

Choose Humane encourages politicians to support the **Platform for Change**, a 5-point plan for a humane approach to refugee policy which has been developed by hundreds of people across the refugee movement.

We are asking people to pledge their support for this alternate policy. We will send the leaders of all major parties the Platform for Change with the names of all the people across the country who want to see it implemented. Thus the more people who get involved the more we can show politicians that the public demands this more humane approach.

We will also be sending key politicians across the country the Platform for Change straight after the election and share the number of people in their electorate who support it.

We are dispelling the insidious idea that has infected our politics: that being cruel wins votes. We want to show the opposite. That the public are demanding – and will vote for – parties and politicians promoting intelligent, compassionate policies.

Together, we will deliver a message to politicians from across the political spectrum: **Australia chooses humane.**

## HOW?

Choose Humane Ambassadors who will help us promote this important campaign in their organisation, community, workplace, university, school, church, council etc.

Ambassadors will hold street stalls and other events to conduct conversations with members of their community about refugee policy, and ask them to sign the Choose Humane pledge.

We will provide you with everything you need to organise a street stall. This pack tells you how.

Don't be afraid to be creative! If you would like to host another kind of event to gather pledges, such as a morning tea, give us a call and we'll help you!

## WHO?

You!

We are sending you this pack because we would like you to be a **Choose Humane Ambassador**.

Ambassadors are engaged and informed people, committed to making sure that the humane treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum is a priority of the next Australian Government

Ambassadors are everyday Australians who are sick of the way our country treats people seeking asylum. They are people who are willing to stand up, take the Choose Humane pledge and proudly promote it amongst their peers and community.

## WHERE?

In local communities all around Australia.

## WHEN?

Street stalls and local events will take place throughout the months of March, April and May 2019, just before the general election is held.

# PLATFORM FOR CHANGE

**You can find a copy of the full Platform for Change [here](#).**

**The five key areas of the platform are:**



End offshore processing



Fair asylum process



Reform detention



Larger refugee program



Improve engagement in Asia

# THEORY OF CHANGE

## SUMMARY

If we gather thousands of pledges from people across the country and deliver them to politicians, then they will see that the public want a more humane, intelligent refugee policy and incorporate this into their election platform and beyond.

## MORE INFO:

We have a detailed plan, a vision for how refugee policy could look in our country, **based on humanity, not cruelty**. This plan is called the **Platform For Change** and was developed by hundreds of people around the country who are part of the refugee movement, or have refugee experience themselves.

We want politicians to know that a large cross section of society, including in their electorate, are demanding an end to policies based on inflicting cruelty on people seeking asylum. Instead, we want people to be treated humanely.

The lead up to the election is a time politicians truly listen to their constituents. So, we need to show them that we are demanding a change.

We are asking people to sign the Choose Humane pledge, which we will deliver to the leaders and key politicians of all major parties in the lead up to the federal election. The more pledges we have, the more likely we are to convince representatives to reject cruelty and instead Choose Humane when it comes to refugee policy.

# KEY MESSAGES

Here are some key messages to help you in speaking to community members, the media and politicians.

- Australians support the humane treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum – and we want the policies of the next government to reflect that.
- We are calling for a progressive and humane policy for refugees and people seeking asylum. It's high time that we started treating people like people.
- Your community chooses humane- do you?
- We know from the community support for Kids off Nauru and the Medevac Bill that there is a groundswell of public support for refugees and people seeking asylum. It's time our politicians got on board.

# HOW TO: RUN A STREET STALL

As ambassadors, one way you can help promote the Choose Humane campaign is by organising street stalls in your community encouraging people to sign the Choose Humane pledge.

These stalls will consist of information about the Platform for Change and the campaign and pledge sign up forms. We can also equip you with campaign t-shirts, posters, leaflets and more.

Before you host your stall, make sure you register it with us so that we can promote your work and collect the pledges!

## TIPS FOR RUNING AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY STALL

Community stalls are a great way to reach out to people in your local community in a way that is simple and effective. Getting together a group of passionate local people to talk about issues that matter to them can often be a significant factor in shifting people's opinions on important issues, like refugee rights.

Here are some tips to help make your community stall easy, fun and effective!

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Volunteers
- Table and chairs
- **Pledge forms** – paper and online if possible.
- **Tally forms**
- Pens
- **Choose Humane posters that you can print**
- **Choose Humane flyers that you can print**
- **Platform for Change summary that you can print**
- If selling t-shirts, sample tees and devices linked to t-shirt sales page. See our *How to* guide [here](#). It's a good idea for yourself and volunteers to wear the t-shirts if you plan on selling them.



## BRIEF VOLUNTEERS BEFOREHAND:

- Organise for volunteers to arrive at least 15 minutes early to set up the space and talk through the aims of the day. Answer any questions and get to know each other a little. It will be a lot more fun if you build a relationship with your fellow vollies!
- Make sure everyone is prepared for various weather conditions and there are water and maybe snacks.
- Make sure everyone has a look through the [summary](#) of Refugee Council of Australia's Platform for Change so they have a sense of what they are asking people to sign for the I Choose Humane pledge!

## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!:

- Pick a spot that is highly visible and gets lots of traffic but isn't directly in the way. Think about spaces just to the side of staircases, elevators, escalators or entrances. That way people will see you but won't feel trapped by you. ie entrance to the supermarket, main university library, train station, church on a Sunday, etc.

## CLEAR SIMPLE MATERIALS

You will have the following material at your stall:

- A computer/tablet open to the [Choose Humane pledge page](#).
- Leaflets and posters about the [Choose Humane campaign](#)
- Information about the [Platform for Change](#).
- A [sign up sheet](#) in case you have problems with wifi.
- [Choose Humane T-shirts](#)

## SET UP YOUR SPACE:

- Make sure your space is appealing and looks interesting. You want to make sure factsheets are not mixed together and that information is easily available for passers-by and volunteers.

## MESSAGING:

- Make sure that everyone in your group is aware of the key campaign messages (see *Key Messages page above*) that you want to share with the people you are speaking with. Refugee policy is complex, but the Platform For Change is a good way to explain the issues simply and quickly. You're not delivering a lecture, you're having a casual conversation.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms - most people won't know what you're talking about.
- Have some opening lines that you establish for the group to use as a greeting. For example:
- ***"Hello, we're here today to talk to people about the treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum in the lead up to the Federal election. Are you interested in hearing more?"***
- See our [Street Stall Script](#) for a suggestion of how to hold conversations with members of the public.

## BEING APPROACHABLE:

- It may sound like a cliché, but people respond well to smiles and relaxed body language. Don't jump out at people, approach them casually. Read their body language and make an assessment about whether they are open to you talking to them or not!
- Don't stand behind the table - be out and roving. People most likely won't come to you, you have to go to them.

## TRANSLATING CONVERSATION INTO ACTION:

- Talking to people is great, but we ultimately want them to take action to help us win our campaign. Don't badger them but do convey the urgency of the need to illustrate community support for a humane refugee policy. Ask them to take the pledge! Remind them it will only take a minute.
- Make sure any handwritten details are clearly legible. Consider quickly reading over what someone has written to make sure you can, otherwise it is a lost engagement! Don't be scared to ask someone to clarify the spelling of their name, or whether that's a 1 or a 7.

## UNDERSTANDING LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT:

- Some people you meet will take your flyer and leave, others will be super engaged and may even want to know how they can get involved in the campaign. Make sure you are reading those cues and give people opportunities for involvement that seem relative to their enthusiasm.
- Here are a few ways people can get involved:
  - **Sign the Choose Humane Pledge**
  - **Share the pledge with your friends, family & networks:** we have made it really simple for you to share the pledge on Facebook, Twitter and Email.
  - **Put up Choose Humane posters:** You can put them up in your office, classroom, church, community centre, library, around your neighbourhood, or whatever you think people might engage. You can print out the posters by following the above link.
  - **Buy a Choose Humane T-shirt:** These great campaign t-shirts send a message to people that people in their communities choose humane. Plus there are discounts for bulk orders
  - **Host a Street Stall:** We know face-to-face values based conversations are the best way to shift people's attitudes. Get together a group of friends, family or colleagues and hold a street stall in an area in your community where there are lots of people and urge people to take the Choose Humane Pledge. You can go ahead and register your event straight away or register to volunteer and we can get in touch to discuss it with you.

**We have everything you need to run a street stall here.**

- **Attend a local event:** There might be a community meeting or a street stall happening near you. Check out our events map to RSVP!
- **Hold a special lunch at your office/university/school/church:** Share information about the Choose Humane campaign, urge people to sign the pledge and talk about the Platform for Change policy that campaign is promoting.
- **Contact their MP**
- **Donate to the campaign**

## FINISHING UP:

- Collect all the tally sheets and the paper copies of the action form. Send them to [Laura.Stacey@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:Laura.Stacey@refugeecouncil.org.au).
- Make sure you also take photos of yourselves in action! Post on social media including #ChooseHumane
- Run a short debrief with the group to see how they are feeling, what worked and what didn't. Consider giving this feedback to campaign organisers for next time.
- Clean up the space - make sure you don't leave rubbish or left over flyers - take everything with you.
- Campaigns are always more fun if you do it with people you know and get along with. Consider going for a coffee, drink or meal afterwards to get to know your fellow volunteers!

## CONGRATULATIONS:

- You've just helped achieve some major wins for the campaign. Pat yourself on the back and get ready for the next time!

# DEALING WITH TRICKY QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

## **I DON'T HAVE TIME:**

- Signing the petition will only take one minute- I have it here on my phone/iPad ready to go
- If they say no, say: No problem, take this leaflet home and have a read when you do have time.

## **I DON'T BELIEVE IN ALLOWING PEOPLE INTO THIS COUNTRY:**

- Probably not worth engaging in the conversation – thank them and move on.
- If you do want to engage, stay polite and just share your values. Talk about values, ie for me helping people in need and giving people a fair go is a key value of mine. What about you?
- But remember, we're not trying to convince people, we're trying to engage people who already share our values on this issue.

## **WHAT ABOUT TERRORISM/SECURITY CONCERNS:**

- Explain that this has often been used as a scare tactic but has no basis in truth. Most people are running away from terror. Explain that Australia has a very rigorous refugee determination process which looks in detail at peoples' history.
- Regarding the offshore cohort: The Government has provided no evidence that there are any paedophiles, rapists or murderers among those offshore. None of those sent to Manus or PNG have been convicted of any such crimes. Furthermore, the Australian government has more security information on those people than on most other people in Australia.

## WHAT'S THE POINT?

- What's the point? I've signed 1000 petitions and they never work.
- Explain that it is different this time due to the very particular context:
- Election coming up means that politicians are more receptive to hearing and acting on concerns from electorate (particularly stress this point if you are in a marginal seat)
- If you can, have some information on hand about your local MP and why it is useful to engage them in particular.
- Use the examples of the Kids Off Nauru and Medevac campaigns to show that public opinion is shifting on this issue
- It is likely to be a major part of the election debate and therefore may be a significant voting factor for many people. Our local representatives will know this.
- This isn't just signing a petition- the pledges will be delivered in person to party leaders and local representatives.

## OUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES WILL NEVER SUPPORT THIS:

- Even if they have been hostile in the past on this issue, they know that there has been a public opinion shift and may adjust their views accordingly in light of the upcoming election.
- Every politician is answerable to their electorate. If we show them that their electorate supports humane refugee policy, it is their job as representative to reflect that.

## OUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE DOESN'T WORK ON THIS ISSUE/IS OR WILL BE A BACKBENCHER:

- There is likely to be a reshuffle after the election, however the result goes. All political representatives may also have to engage with this issue publicly given its prominence in the media.

# HOW TO: SELL T-SHIRTS



The Choose Humane T-shirts are a great way to spread the word about the Choose Humane campaign and key message.

By selling t-shirts you are helping the Refugee Council of Australia in two ways:

- Spreading the word about the Choose Humane campaign.
- Helping us amplify the campaign. All profits from the sale of the t-shirts go straight back into the campaign, thus helping us reach far more people! RCOA operates on a tiny budget so essentially the sale of t-shirts is how we are funding this campaign.

**Cost: \$25** (all money raised supports the campaign. )

## **Sizes:**

- Women: 8-16
- Unisex: small, medium and large

**How to buy:** [https://www.choosehumane.org.au/t\\_shirts](https://www.choosehumane.org.au/t_shirts)

**How to sell:** At your street stall or similar event, have a device or two fired up with the order form ready to go. We will send you sample t shirts for people to try on and you can then navigate them through the order form- we will send it directly to their address.



# CHOOSE HUMANE DAY

**TUESDAY, 14th MAY IS CHOOSE HUMANE DAY:**

**#ChooseHumane Day is an opportunity for Australians to unite our voices and publicly call for a humane refugee policy just before the general election.**

- Don't forget to wear your t-shirt and share a picture on social media using the hashtag #ChooseHumane.
- Encourage people to buy a T-shirt and do the same.





# WHAT'S NEXT?

- If your stall went well, consider hosting another or asking friends to get on board with the campaign.
- There are many other ways you can support the pledge. See our document on [ways to support the campaign](#) for some suggestions.
- Keep posting about the campaign on social media, particularly as people head to the polls. You can use pictures and quotes from your event to create memes.
- Keep in touch with your local representative. Consider checking in with them a few days or a week later to follow up and see if they need help with any actions they agreed to as a result of your meeting.
- Keep us up to date with your progress throughout the journey. If you have permission, send us photos of your event so that we can use them for promoting the campaign. When you've met with your politician, give us a call and let us know how it went and we can talk through next steps together.

# USEFUL RESOURCES

- [Street stall script](#)
- [How to: recruit volunteers.](#)
- [How to: gain media interest \(including sample media release\)](#)
- [How to: use social media](#)
- [How to: approach your local politician](#)
- [www.choosehumane.org.au](http://www.choosehumane.org.au)
- [www.refugeecouncil.org.au/platform-change](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/platform-change)
- If you get stuck or need more support, get in touch. You can reach us on 0488 035 535 or [Laura.Stacey@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:Laura.Stacey@refugeecouncil.org.au).



Refugee Council  
of Australia