

# SAFE START. FAIR FUTURE.

*Safe Start. Fair Future* details long overdue policy changes to ensure fair and safe treatment of asylum seekers and Convention Refugees. In the coming months, this report will be shared with the sector and decision makers to seek commitments that will improve outcomes as recommended in the report and summarised, in two sections, below.

A key opportunity will emerge in April 2022 when the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (NZRRS) is reviewed for the first time in ten years. At present, many refugees are excluded from the strategy. Now is the time to fix this. Let's make things fair and straightforward: a refugee is a refugee, and we should treat them all the same.

The present moment presents a critical opportunity to support people who are already in Aotearoa and connect them to existing services. These changes will not change the numbers of asylum seekers, have minimal anticipated costs and likely long term social cohesion benefits. We cannot wait another decade. Now is the time to improve settlement futures and ensure that all refugees get a fair go.



## SAFE

**Provide targeted policies and practically accessible services to ensure people are protected from extreme poverty or exploitation**

On average, over the last decade, Aotearoa New Zealand has received 394 asylum seeker claims each year, which is one of the lowest numbers in the world. There is almost no consistent funding to support organisations working with people as they wait for a decision on their claim. Funding targeted services through key community organisations will ensure people have access to assistance and support services and are not at risk of destitution, exploitation or harm.

### **Our SAFE Recommendations:**

1. Adequate resourcing of cross-cultural workers and community navigators to assist asylum seekers with access to entitled services. (p.8)
2. Funding short-term accommodation services for those without access to these services (p.10)
3. Specialist case workers at agencies, especially Work and Income, who are trained in asylum seeker and refugee policies (p.9)
4. Ensure mobile support services for people residing outside of Auckland (p.12)



## FAIR

**Provide all refugees equal access to support to ensure strong community integration.**

On average, 178 Asylum Seekers are granted Convention Refugee status each year in Aotearoa New Zealand. While many Convention Refugees make a strong start to their new lives in this country, some remain in vulnerable situations. These people should have the option to access support services similar to those offered to people arriving through the Refugee Quota.

### **Our FAIR Recommendations:**

1. Inclusion of all people with refugee status in the NZRRS (p.14)
2. Ensure that settlement supports are available, accessible, adaptable and acceptable (p. 15)
3. Streamline permanent residency to help refugees settle and participate meaningfully in Aotearoa New Zealand (p.19)



**Safe Start. Fair Futures** was produced by the Centre for Asia Pacific Refugee Studies (CAPRS) at the University of Auckland and Asylum Seeker Support Trust (ASST). To download a version of the report and to find out more information visit: CAPRS at <https://bit.ly/34slnp9> and ASST at <https://bit.ly/3BrIAUx>