



## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY Inc.

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

Peter Wertheim, the Executive Director of the ECAJ, said today:

“The ECAJ welcomes the Prime Minister’s statement on refugee policy and commends the government for its proposal for working constructively with other governments, the UN and appropriate non-government organisations to ameliorate the plight of refugees around the world and to end people smuggling, and for focusing on resettling refugees in parts of Australia where there are labour shortages. The Opposition’s idea of trialing a refugee sponsorship program also has merit.

More detailed information is required to ensure that the use of any other country as a centre for processing applications by persons seeking asylum in Australia will meet Australia’s moral and legal obligations to deal with such applications with reasonable expedition and in a spirit of compassion. Past experience has shown that the overwhelming majority of asylum seekers are genuine refugees in real distress, and it is important that their applications be processed promptly and on their merits regardless of their ethnic origin or the state of their paper-work.

We urge all Australians to engage in a discussion of the issues in a thoughtful manner and without stoking irrational fears or resorting to pejorative generalizations.”

**Peter Wertheim AM | Executive Director**

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