



CONFERENCE OF LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES IN NEW SOUTH WALES CLRI (NSW)

ABN: 52 476 362 010
Member of Catholic Church Religious Group

Senator Chris Evans
Minister for Immigration
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Dear Senator Evans,

Over the past years Australia has seen the arrival of Humanitarian refugees from many parts of the world. Currently one of the largest groups of refugees arriving in Australia is from Africa, Sudan in particular. The Sudanese refugees experience all the difficulties and challenges you would expect – lack of English, limited education, unemployment and considerable trauma. These difficulties are currently exacerbated by lack of housing.

According to our members and some Catholic agencies, there has been a rapid increase in the number of Sudanese made homeless by foreclosures of their landlords' investment properties. There are also unscrupulous bank, real estate and loan-company officials offering loans, with huge mortgages attached, to newly arrived refugees with limited language and no knowledge of the banking system. Desperate for housing these people, reliant on Centrelink payments, take out loans without realising the repercussions. There is also a considerable shortage of houses adequate for the size of some Sudanese families and this requires families to split up.

Given the current programme of consultations regarding homelessness, being conducted by Minister Plibersek, and the planning for the next group of Humanitarian refugees we thought it important to make the point that provision for long-term housing has to be factored into any planning for humanitarian refugees. We welcome the Australian government's generous provision for humanitarian refugees but ask that the re-settlement programmes take into account the vulnerability of New Arrivals when it comes to accessing and retaining adequate housing.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Sr Libby Rogerson ibvm
9 July 2008

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