

## **Employ our refugees**

It is quite intriguing to listen to some of the commentary around the labour shortage that is currently evident, particularly in the regions. I have just come back from a visit to Dunsborough and Margaret River for advocacy reasons.

Most conversations with the locals there came back to the one question." Why are we not allowing the refugees that we have incarcerated in detention, some for around 7-9 years, to come in to the regions and relocate them in the community? This will be recuperative for their mental health and also provide a very significant source of labour for our fruit and vegetable growers.

The previous experience, at first hand, for some of the growers in this region has been very positive. They have had Afghan and other ethnicity refugees who have been very settled and taken to the lifestyle of the region. Generally they also display a level of commitment and endeavour that make them model employees.

So, before we go racing off to find backpackers from overseas (who may not even be allowed to fly here!) let us have a look in our own backyard and see if there are options thus far unexamined.

Suresh Rajan"