



Refugee Council
of Australia

Expression of interest: Open Government Forum-NAP2

Name: Dr Joyce Chia, Director of Policy, Refugee Council of Australia

Motivation for joining

My interest in joining is in fostering greater transparency and accountability in government on behalf of disadvantaged communities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I bring to the table a diverse range of experiences: as a female migrant; as a representative of a national peak body which works regularly with government stakeholders and civil society; as a past employee of both federal and State governments; and as an academic in public and charity law.

Selection criteria

Demonstrated support of OGP's vision and the Open Government Declaration

In my work at the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission, I led the development of an open register of charities which was one of the first resources available on data.gov.au. My team ensured this data was used for the benefit of charities through an active research program that engaged regularly with civil society. We worked closely with State governments and other federal agencies on data-sharing agreements to reduce red tape. We also developed a proactive information disclosure regime, active programs of education, consultation and outreach, and a progressive social media policy.

Expertise relevant to the Open Government Partnership, including existing or probable future Australian Open Government commitments

At the Refugee Council of Australia, we have long argued for greater transparency and accountability in a climate of secrecy. Our policy work is substantially affected by government effectiveness, at all levels. In 2019, the Refugee Council of Australia will be partnering with an academic on a project involving government accountability in refugee policy. With my academic background in public law, experience working within government, and most importantly as someone who spends much of their time trying to get and disseminate official information, I bring a variety of perspectives to the mission of open government.

Demonstrated ability to engage broad and diverse community networks

As a peak body, we have regular contact with hundreds of NGOs across the country supporting culturally and linguistically diverse people, and participate in many local, State and national networks, including some sponsored by or involving government. We also support or are in contact with many refugee-led networks, including at a regional and international level. In my previous roles as an academic and as a government official, I have been responsible for creating national research networks.

Previous experience working with and influencing government

I have significant experience of working with government, including working within federal government in a role that required negotiation with State and other federal government agencies, and as an active participant in influencing charity and refugee policy.

Desirability of maintaining some continuity between successive Forums, balanced with the desirability of reaching new communities and reflecting emerging open government priorities

While I have not previously been engaged actively with the Forum, I believe it is essential that new and emerging communities should be represented. New and emerging communities experience distinct disadvantages in engaging with government, and access to government information for these communities is a prominent theme of much of the work that we do at the Refugee Council.

