

REFUGEE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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SUBMISSION TO THE NSW GOVERNMENT GREEN PAPER CULTURAL HARMONY: THE NEXT DECADE 2002-2012

July 2002

The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the New South Wales Government Green Paper, Cultural Harmony: The Next Decade 2002-2012.

The Refugee Council of Australia is the peak non-government agency in Australia concerned with issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers. The Council works to promote humane, flexible and legally defensible policy towards refugees, asylum seekers and displaced peoples by the Australian Governments and the Australian community.

The Council welcomes the recognition by the NSW State Government that its approach to refugees and asylum seekers is an issue that influences the success of multicultural policy. The NSW Government has a crucial leadership role in the development of multicultural policy in Australia. As the state with the largest concentration of refugees, it also has the opportunity to show crucial leadership in its treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Council has long been concerned by Federal Government policy towards refugees who have arrived unauthorised and the impact this policy has had on NSW. As a result of this policy, and particularly that pertaining to refugees with a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV), the NSW State Government's approach to refugees and asylum seekers, is critical.

It is the view of the Council that the limitations placed on access to essential settlement services will have significant social and economic costs to the community in the long run and are causing substantial harm to the refugees. As the economic and social costs will eventually lie with the State Government, strategies need to be developed by the NSW State Government to minimise the impact on this policy on NSW.

RCOA would like to make a number of specific comments on the section entitled 'The Approach to Refugees and Asylum Seekers' and on the role of the NSW State Government in implementing this approach. Comments are also made on the NSW approach to refugees and asylum seekers in relation to employment and skills recognition, the effect of international events and language services. Finally, the new key objectives that underpin the Community Relations Action Plan 2012 are discussed in relation to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in NSW.

1. The Approach to Refugees and Asylum Seekers (p79)

The comments here relate directly to the section entitled 'The Approach to Refugees and Asylum Seekers', Green Paper: Cultural Harmony: The Next Decade 2002-2012.

1.1 Support for the Temporary Protection Visa Regime

There appears to be agreement with the Federal Government's policy of denying services to some people in order to deter others.

It is the view of the Council that the limitations placed on access to essential settlement services will have significant social and economic costs to the community in the long run and are causing substantial harm to the refugees. The Council also argues that the temporary protection visa breaches Australia's obligations under international law. For these reasons, the Council argues that the Federal Government's policy of granting of temporary protection visas to people determined to be refugees is not acceptable and for this reason we have called for it to be abandoned.

When the Green Paper says that citizenship refers to "a recognition of the importance of shared values within a democratic framework governed by the rule of law" (p79.a), it implies that TPV holders are undeserving because of their mode of entry. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees clearly states that a refugee should not be punished for their mode of entry (at Article 31). The distinction between deserving and undeserving refugees on the basis of their means of arrival does not match our obligations to refugees under international law, the realities of the refugee experience, or the NSW State Government objective of access and equity within a framework of social justice.

It should also be noted that many refugees who are granted a TPV will no longer just be denied 'immediate permanent residency' (para 2). As a result of legislation introduced in September 2001, some TPV holders will never have access to permanent residency¹. As a result, a number of TPV holders will never be able to access the settlement services they need.

¹ The bar on TPV holders accessing a Permanent Protection Visa (PPV) will apply to those people who did not lodge an application for a PPV before 27 September 2001 and who fall

1.2 The Impact of the Temporary Protection Visa on Refugees

While the impact of the TPV regime on community groups and volunteers is acknowledged (para 3), the impact on the refugees with a TPV is not.

Many refugees with a TPV have poor psychological health. They are in a continual state of insecurity and feel discriminated against not only by the Government but also by the education system, employers and other welfare agencies. These on-going stresses interact with and exacerbate symptoms of anxiety, depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.² Their experiences of persecution in their country of origin, the trauma of flight, and the impact of detention are compounded by their restricted access to most settlement services, the uncertainty of their status and their extended (and in some cases permanent) separation from their immediate family.

Within the estimated total of over 3,800 TPV holders in NSW there are a number of 'at risk' groups that require urgent attention. These include:

- unaccompanied minors;
- detached minors³;
- families;
- people with disabilities; and
- survivors of torture and trauma.

These groups have particular needs that must be addressed as a priority by the State Government.

1.3 The Long-term Impact of the Temporary Protection Visa on NSW

The Green Paper does not give consideration to the long-term implications of denying essential services.

Not only are refugees with a TPV denied a number of federally funded settlement and support services (as detailed in Appendix A), they are also

within the following category which is set out in new Regulation 866.215: since leaving their home country, they have resided in a country for a continuous period of seven days or more; AND they could have sought and obtained effective protection either from: that country; OR from the offices of the UNHCR located in that country. The Minister has a discretionary power to waive this requirement if it is in the public interest to do so.

² Fernandes P, 'Burning in the Fire': Working with TPV holders in NSW, research presented at the Diversity in Health Conference, Sydney 2001.

³ Detached minors are minors whose relationship with their legal guardian, usually a relative such as an older brother or uncle, has broken down. The quality of care provided to this group is inconsistent. Where family breakdown occurs it is rare for the minor to be reclassified as an unaccompanied minor and gain access to the same level of services as unaccompanied minors.

excluded from many state services whose eligibility requirements exclude temporary residents⁴.

RCOA is deeply concerned about the impact the denial of services will have on NSW in terms of long term welfare dependency, community disharmony and effect of having marginalised people with a history of trauma living in the community.

Already over half the total are unemployed and reliant on welfare payments.⁵ Despite high motivation to find work to support their families overseas, the chances of TPV holders finding work are limited. Exclusion from funded English classes and labour market programs, together with issues like skills recognition and the reluctance of employers to offer permanent jobs to temporary residents, make it very hard for them to get jobs. Without assistance to break this cycle many will continue to be welfare dependent for long periods.

RCOA predicts that the costs of delinquency and dependency on the NSW State Government may be high, particularly for unaccompanied minors whose complex array of developmental, cultural, educational and social needs are often left unmet. RCOA has raised concerns⁶ about the level of resources available to DoCS to undertake their role as the delegated guardian of unaccompanied minors and whether the level of support afforded to 'wards of the state' is sufficient to meet the complex legal and social needs of unaccompanied refugees.

The financial implications of denying early intervention to people with disabilities, and children in particular, are also well documented⁷.

1.4 The Scope of the Approach to Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The State Government's 'Approach to Refugees and Asylum Seekers' is very limited in its content - the focus is only on refugees with a TPV. In fact there are many different groups in the community:

- asylum seekers⁸;
- refugees with a TPV (visa subclass 785);
- offshore TPV holders (visa subclasses 415 and 447);

⁴ This includes access to public housing, tertiary education subsidies, community grants, some disability services and some medical treatments.

⁵ TPV holders are not eligible for the full range of Social Security Payments. They are eligible for the Special Benefit, which equates to roughly 80% of the standard unemployment benefit.

⁶ See the RCOA submission to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention, April 2002.

⁷ See the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association NSW submission to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Inquiry into Children in Detention, 'Captives in a Land of Oz: Children with Disability in Australian Immigration Detention Centres', May 2002.

⁸ While the section is titled 'The approach to refugees and asylum seekers' only refugees with a TPV are referred to. The approach to asylum seekers is not directly addressed.

- refugees with a Permanent Protection Visa (visa subclasses 200 and 204);
- humanitarian program entrants (visa subclass 202);
- holders of Safe Haven Visas.

Each of these groups has different entitlements and different needs that must be recognised and addressed by the State Government.

2. A Recommended Approach to Refugees with a Temporary Protection Visa

2.1 The Rationale for a New Approach

While the Green Paper states that of the impact of the TPV on New South Wales needs to be addressed, it does not specify how.

RCOA strongly recommends that the State Government provide the same level of services to Temporary Protection Visa holders as Permanent Protection Visa holders for the following reasons:

- refugees, independent of their means of arrival, have the right to basic services. These obligations are enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. That the Commonwealth Government is arguably in breach of these obligations does not remove the responsibility of New South Wales to act in accordance with these provisions;
- experience has shown that if refugees are to become productive members of the community they need access to specialised settlement services. Since the Galbally Report of 1978, successive Federal Governments have recognised that refugees and humanitarian entrants will have needs additional to and distinct from other groups of migrants and will have a continuing need for assistance from both the Government and the community sector for some time;
- the long term financial cost of denying access to essential services will far outweigh the immediate costs for the NSW Government. Australia's failure to provide constructive support to the Indochinese minors who came in the 1980s resulted in young people falling through the cracks of society—neither functionally literate in their own language or in English, not accepted by their own community and excluded from the mainstream. The NSW Government is still paying the costs of delinquency, dependency and gang membership for this group. Arguably the long term costs of the TPV have already been shifted from the Commonwealth to the State Government;
- there is a social cost of having marginalised and angry people in the community. A commitment to Australia, its interests and future, is not a

realistic expectation until TPV holders are able to access and participate equally in the community. The presence of marginalised people in the community also has the potential to undermine community support for refugees. This has implications not just for the refugee and humanitarian program, but also for the objective of the State Government to promote community harmony. The success of multicultural policies in the public eye depends on the success of all culturally diverse communities.

Other state governments have changed their policy to lessen these impacts on their state and in recognition that many services offered by states have eligibility requirements which include permanent residency. The Queensland State Government has approved that Queensland Government agencies provide the same level of services to TPV holders as Permanent Protection Visa holders⁹.

The following services are now available to TPV entrants in Queensland;

- English Language tuition through TAFE Colleges;
- all full-fee vocational courses, subject to availability;
- rental bond loans;
- access to public housing;
- access to a 38 bed boarding house which has been provided for on-arrival accommodation;
- support to access the private rental market;
- children with a TPV will have access to state schools at no cost;
- English as a Second Language (ESL) tuition for children at school.

The Victorian and South Australian Governments have also provided substantial resources to community groups to support TPV holders.

2.2 Concerns about the Concentration of Refugees in NSW

The NSW State Government's concerns about the concentration of refugees in Sydney is well known. It has often been suggested that providing services to TPV holders in NSW would attract more to the state, resulting in a significant financial burden for the state. On this matter RCOA would like to make the following points:

- TPV holders are already in Sydney. If the presence of settlement services were the rationale for TPV movements, the majority of TPV holders would be in Queensland. Instead an estimated 49% are in NSW. Given that they are already here, RCOA argues that the consequences of not providing for basic needs could well be greater than the cost of providing services;

⁹ Included as Appendix B is a copy of the research report commissioned by Multicultural Affairs Queensland in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

- NSW has some of the most successful examples of regional settlement in Australia. The positive economic impacts of Afghan refugees in Young and Dubbo are well documented. The State Government has a role in working with regional communities to put in place the structural support that is needed for successful settlement. There are many lessons from recent examples to learn from and promote to the wider community.

2.3 The Role of the State Government

The NSW State Government has a role in:

- promoting an understanding of the needs of all refugees and asylum seekers by state departments as part of the commitment to access and equity;
- ensuring good coordination of services across and within departments;
- identifying gaps in services offered by the Federal Government and either promoting Federal solutions or supplementing gaps with state services; and
- developing meaningful partnerships with Non Government Organisations to undertake these tasks.

2.4 Recommendations

The Refugee Council of Australia recommends that the NSW State Government:

- avoid the appearance of discriminating against refugees on the basis of their means of arrival to ensure consistency with our obligations under international law and the objectives that underpins the Community Relations Action Plan 2012 of access and equity within a framework of social justice obligations;
- ensure that the Green Paper acknowledge the impact of the TPV regime on refugees;
- ensure that the Green Paper recognises the long-term implications of the denial of essential services to refugees with a TPV;
- promote successful examples of refugee settlement in regional areas such as Young and Dubbo;
- continue to work with regional communities to put in place the structural support that is needed for successful settlement in regional communities;
- undertake as a priority to provide TPV holders with access to the same entitlements as permanent residents. The Council recognizes that this

proposal requires legislative changes and the allocation of additional resources. We reiterate that the current system is deeply flawed, ultimately more costly, and requires radical change. This approach would be in the spirit of the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* preamble which promotes equal rights and responsibilities within a cohesive and harmonious multicultural society and which makes a formal commitment to the principle of greatest possible access to government services.

3. Other Comments on the Community Relations Plan of Action 2012

3.1 The Migration Program (p77)

RCOA commends the government for recognising that it is too simplistic to say that skilled migrants are a gain while refugees are a liability. Refugees have made a significant contribution to this state in the arts, academia and the economy.

3.2 Settlement Services (p77-78)

This section of the Green Paper recognises the negative consequences of the Commonwealth policy restricting access to many government services for two years after a migrant's arrival. If this is accepted, the same argument can be made in relation to TPV holders who, as has previously been explained, are being denied access to essential support. These restrictions are similarly an issue of equity.

Further, the recent introduction of the Commonwealth's Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme has also significantly changed the type and structure of services available to refugees and humanitarian entrants in their first months of arrival. It is widely considered to have reduced the availability of case management available to this group during the initial period of resettlement.

Where Commonwealth funded services are not available to assist complex cases, the responsibility falls to the State Government. It is the State Government who has to address the consequences of not providing preventative services to vulnerable members of the community in the long term. Identifying gaps in services offered by the Federal Government and either promoting Federal solutions or supplementing gaps with state services is essential in ensuring that refugees and humanitarian entrants are able to make a positive contribution to NSW.

The Refugee Council of Australia recommends that the NSW State Government:

- identify gaps in services offered to refugees and humanitarian entrants through the IHSS and where identified either promote Federal solutions or supplement these gaps with state services.

3.3 Employment and Skills Recognition (p78)

RCOA applauds the State Government's recognition of the need to ensure that refugees have ready access to appropriate employment services. A fast and fair process to allow refugees to have their qualifications assessed and a process to facilitate the upgrading of skills through work experience and/or education (p78) is indeed essential in ensuring that refugees are able to contribute to the economy.

Currently the costs of qualification assessment and translation are prohibitive for many refugees. Local work experience is a prerequisite for most jobs, often precluding even over-qualified refugees from job opportunities. The Council would welcome the opportunity to participate in these improvements.

The Refugee Council of Australia recommends that the NSW State Government:

- continue to explore strategies to allow refugees to have their qualifications assessed and develop a process to facilitate the upgrading of skills through work experience and/or education.

3.4 The Effect of International Events (p78)

The acknowledgment by the State Government of the effect of international events is also to be commended. In particular, the recognition that refugees who have come to this country to escape from ethnic or religious conflict face an extra burden when the wider community associate them with distant events (and often their persecutors). However, it is important to distinguish between people's concerns for injustices and tragedies in their country of origin, and the negative reaction towards them from a proportion of the Australian community. Vilification by this group of the general public has been on the basis of ethnicity, religion and race, not their victims concern for their homelands.

This being said, the State Government's reactions to international events must go beyond the promotion of Australian citizenship. A number of affected communities do not have access to Australian citizenship.¹⁰ Consequently the continued State Government support for the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors and NSW Refugee Health play an essential role in supporting these affected communities. Direct support for the communities affected will lessen their feelings of exclusion and isolation.

¹⁰ These groups include refugees with a TPV, asylum seekers, and holders of Safe Haven Visas.

The state government also has a crucial role in educating the wider community to distinguish between the affected communities and those who undertake heinous acts overseas. The promotion of reliable information on the affected communities and their reasons for flight will also assist address the fears that have caused these negative reactions.

The Refugee Council of Australia recommends that the NSW State Government:

- clearly distinguish refugees' concern for injustices and tragedies in their country of origin from the causes of vilification in the wake of international events;
- develop strategies that, in addition to the promotion of citizenship, will address vilification. This is in recognition of the fact that some people in the community are not able to access citizenship. Strategies should include direct support for the communities affected and education for the wider community on refugees and their reasons for flight so the public is better able to distinguish between the persecutor and persecuted;
- continue support for the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors and NSW Refugee Health, both of which play an essential role in supporting refugee communities in periods of stress.

3.5 Language Services (p94)

RCOA commends the state government for its continued recognition of the importance of interpreter services and the proposal to establish a Community Obligation Language Service Fund to assist agencies and individuals to obtain the language services they need. RCOA would like to recommend, while the service is in its planning stage, that those groups most in need of this service – those who have no access to TIS services - be the priority. Currently refugees with a TPV, asylum seekers and Safe Haven Visa holders are at a particular disadvantage in this respect. In addition, the eligibility criteria must be flexible and responsive enough to operate effectively in emergencies.

The Refugee Council of Australia recommends that the NSW State Government:

- ensure that eligibility for Community Obligation Language Service Fund be available to refugees with a TPV, asylum seekers and Safe Haven Visa holders.

4. New Key Objectives

4.1 Leadership (p 81-82)

RCOA commends the NSW Government for its recognition of the importance of leadership in supporting the promotion of equal rights and responsibilities to all the people of NSW within a cohesive and harmonious society. Responsible leadership in relation to refugees and asylum seekers has a pivotal role in allaying the public's concerns for security, while ensuring a humane and legally defensible approach to refugees and asylum seekers.

As the state with the largest refugee population in a country with an outstanding record of refugee resettlement, NSW has the capacity to be a world leader in refugee settlement. Addressing any negative impacts of Commonwealth Government policies and international events will be an essential demonstration of this capacity.

The recommendation that the Commission develop a training package on media awareness for community leaders is strongly commended. It is important that the Commission be proactive in promoting this package to the communities with the least access to this information, particularly new and emerging refugees communities.

The Refugee Council of Australia recommends that the NSW State Government:

- ensure that media training awareness for community leaders be promoted to new and emerging refugee communities.

4.2 Community Harmony (p 83-84)

The role of the government in fostering a climate of mutual respect is critical to the maintenance of a harmonious community. RCOA supports the role of the Commission in developing information networks and strategies to disseminate information. Myths, stereotypes and misinformation have generated community tensions towards refugees and asylum seekers. RCOA recommends that the Commission prioritize refugees and asylum seekers as an issue that would benefit from this approach.

As previously stated, RCOA believes that the introduction of the TPV has been dangerously divisive and has undermined efforts to promote multiculturalism in Australia. The visible presence of a marginalised underclass of refugees in the community has the potential to undermine community support for all refugees and for multiculturalism in general. The vilification of Sikh community in the aftermath of September 11 is a poignant reminder of how easily the public can generalise from one group of people to another.

The Refugee Council of Australia recommends that the NSW State Government:

- prioritise refugees and asylum seekers as a group that would benefit from the creation of an information network by the Community Relations Commission to collate and disseminate reliable information to ensure that public debate is based on facts rather than stereotypes.

4.3 Access and Equity (p 85)

RCOA notes that the NSW Government's aim that all individuals should have the greatest opportunity to make use of and participate in activities and services is undermined by current restrictions on refugees with a TPV. It should also be noted that asylum seekers in the community are also prevented from participation through eligibility restrictions and lack of specialised assistance.

RCOA recommends that EAPS be used to address the current gaps in service provision to asylum seekers and refugees. Refugees have needs additional to the broader migrant community. One example of a specific access issue for refugees is the fear many refugees have of police, based on their experiences of persecution by the police in their home countries. Requiring consideration of access issues for refugees in the EAPS would ensure that relevant sections of the public sector are addressing barriers to access and equity.

Beyond monitoring conformity with EAPS, the State Government also has an important role in facilitating access and equity within the private sector. Some businesses, such as Real Estate Agents, have very poor records of providing a non discriminatory service to refugees. The State Government has an essential role in addressing these issues through legislation and monitoring.

Finally, progress in cross-cultural training is an important step in equipping staff to effectively operate in a culturally diverse environment. RCOA recommends that, where possible, training in refugee issues be strongly encouraged by the Commission as part of EAPS reporting requirements.

The Refugee Council of Australia recommends that the NSW State Government:

- promote an understanding of the needs of asylum seekers and refugees by state departments as part of their commitment to access and equity;
- ensure good coordination of services to all refugees and asylum seekers across and within departments;

- identify gaps in services offered by the Federal Government, especially for TPV holders and asylum seekers, and either promote Federal solutions or supplement with state services;
- include access issues for refugees in the EAPS to ensure that relevant sections of the public sector are addressing barriers to access and equity;
- continue to play a role in addressing access and equity within the private sector through legislation and monitoring;
- strongly encourage the public sector, through EAPS, to include training in refugee issues for staff.

5. Summary of Recommendations

The Refugee Council of Australia recommends that the NSW State Government:

- avoid the appearance of discriminating against refugees on the basis of their means of arrival to ensure consistency with our obligations under international law and the objectives that underpins the Community Relations Action Plan 2012 of access and equity within a framework of social justice obligations;
- ensure that the Green Paper acknowledge the impact of the TPV regime on refugees;
- ensure that the Green Paper recognises the long-term implications of the denial of essential services to refugees with a TPV;
- undertake as a priority to provide TPV holders with access to the same entitlements as permanent residents. The Council recognizes that this proposal requires legislative changes and the allocation of additional resources. We reiterate that the current system is deeply flawed, ultimately more costly, and requires radical change;
- promote successful examples of refugee settlement in regional areas such as Young and Dubbo;
- continue to work with regional communities to put in place the structural support that is needed for successful settlement in regional communities;
- promote an understanding of the needs of asylum seekers and refugees by state departments as part of their commitment to access and equity;

- ensure good coordination of services to all refugees and asylum seekers across and within departments;
- identify gaps in services offered by the Federal Government, especially for TPV holders and asylum seekers, and either promote Federal solutions or supplement with state services;
- continue to explore strategies to allow refugees to have their qualifications assessed and develop a process to facilitate the upgrading of skills through work experience and/or education;
- identify gaps in services offered to refugees and humanitarian entrants through the IHSS and where identified either promote Federal solutions or supplement these gaps with state services;
- clearly distinguish refugees' concern for injustices and tragedies in their country of origin from the causes of vilification in the wake of international events;
- develop strategies that, in addition to the promotion of citizenship, will address vilification. This is in recognition of the fact that some people in the community are not able to access citizenship. Strategies should include direct support for the communities affected and education for the wider community on refugees and their reasons for flight so the public is better able to distinguish between the persecutor and persecuted;
- continue support for the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors and NSW Refugee Health, both of which play an essential role in supporting refugee communities;
- ensure that eligibility for Community Obligation Language Service Fund be available to refugees with a TPV, asylum seekers and Safe Haven Visa holders;
- prioritise refugees and asylum seekers as a group that would benefit from the creation of an information network by the Community Relations Commission to collate and disseminate reliable information to ensure that public debate is based on facts rather than stereotypes;
- include access issues for refugees in the EAPS to ensure that relevant sections of the public sector are addressing barriers to access and equity;
- continue to play a role in addressing access and equity within the private sector through legislation and monitoring;

- strongly encourage the public sector, through EAPS, to include training in refugee issues for staff.

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INFORMATION PAPER ON TEMPORARY PROTECTION VISAS

May 2001

On 13th October 1999 the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs announced that unauthorised arrivals who are successful in their applications for refugee status in Australia will no longer be granted permanent residence but instead given a three year temporary entry visa (Visa Subclass 785). After three years, they will have to apply again for refugee status. Asylum seekers who arrived lawfully will still be granted permanent residence visas (Visa Subclass 866). Two classes of refugees have thus been created and both have very different entitlements:

	Permanent Protection Visa	Temporary Protection Visa
Social Security	Immediate access to the full range of social security benefits	Access only to Special Benefit for which a range of eligibility criteria apply. Ineligible for Newstart, Sickness Allowance, Parenting Payment, Youth Allowance, Austudy and a range of other benefits.
Education	Same access to education as any other permanent resident.	Access to school education subject to state policy. Effective preclusion from tertiary education due to imposition of full fees.
Settlement Support	Access to full range of DIMA settlement support services.	Not eligible for most DIMA funded services such as MRCs and ethno-specific community welfare agencies. Can use Early Health Assessment and Intervention Programs.
Family Reunion	Able to bring members of immediate family (spouse and children) to Australia.	No family reunion rights (including reunion with spouse and children).
Work Rights	Permission to work.	Permission to work but ability to find employment influenced by temporary nature of visa and poor English skills. Ineligible for most employment assistance programs.
Language Training	Access to 510 hours of English language training.	Not eligible for the federally funded English language programs: the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) or the Advance English for Migrants Program (AEMP).
Medical Benefits	Automatic eligibility for Medicare.	Currently eligible for temporary Medicare cards.
Travel	Will be able to leave the country and return without jeopardising	No automatic right of return.

their visa.	
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The vast majority of people being granted TPVs at this time are from Iraq and Afghanistan. The remainder are from many countries including Somalia, Iraq, Algeria and Kuwait.

Large numbers of TPVs holders are currently being released from detention centres. It is probable that over 4,000 will be released during 2000-2001. Most are coming out of the three main detention centres: Port Hedland and Curtin (at Derby) in Western Australia and Woomera in South Australia. They are taken by bus to various cities around the country. The majority have thus far been taken to:

Adelaide
Perth
Brisbane
Melbourne

Small numbers have also been taken to Darwin, Hobart, Canberra and some regional centres.

Those from the three big detention centres are not being brought directly to **Sydney** but large numbers (about 44% of the total) are relocating to Sydney on their own initiative. In addition, Sydney also sees TPV holders who have been released from Villawood Immigration Detention Centre. These come from a far greater range of countries, though many are from the Middle East.

Because TPV holders are not eligible for most existing settlement support services, new services are having to be put in place for them. In many instances, these are being provided by church agencies and most are using volunteer labour. **The most pressing needs identified for TPV holders are affordable accommodation, access to English classes and access to employment.** In addition, many TPV holders are deeply distressed by their inability to be reunited with their families.

In most states networks of supporters for TPV holders are evolving. Contact with these networks can be made through:

Sydney: Refugee Council of Australia - 02 9660 5300
STARTTS Auburn Office - 02 9646 6634