



Refugee Council
of Australia



3 November 2022

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

As representatives of the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) and the National Refugee-led Advisory and Advocacy Group (NRAAG), we are writing on behalf of a broad coalition of refugee-led organisations, asylum seeker support agencies, community legal centres and refugee advocacy groups to request a meeting to discuss the implementation of your election commitment to end temporary protection.

The ALP's commitment to grant permanent protection to refugees on Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs) was very well received, as a welcome acknowledgement that the temporary protection policy has caused great distress since its reintroduction in 2014. The distress has been greatest for the many people on TPVs and SHEVs who have been separated from members of their immediate family for more than nine years.

People living on TPVs and SHEVs regularly share with us the despair that they and their communities are experiencing as more time passes without a clear timeline for the end of their temporary protection. Frontline agencies and community groups supporting people on these visas are receiving daily calls from highly distraught community members wondering what is happening and why they do not yet have clarity about their visas. This distress is heightened by the level of risk being experienced by relatives still stuck in countries of origin such as Afghanistan, Myanmar, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Tragically, some refugees have lost family members in recent months. These include a father whose teenage daughter was killed in a terrorist attack on young Hazara students in Kabul five weeks ago, seven years after he first applied unsuccessfully for his family to be reunited in Australia.

In our meetings with the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, Mr Giles has assured us that the abolition of temporary protection is the Government's highest priority for refugee policy reform. What is not clear to us is when the Cabinet will agree to implement this commitment and what steps will be taken to assist separated families to be reunited quickly.

A small delegation of people living through this painful policy and a few refugee sector representatives would like to meet with you to discuss the impact of the delay in abolishing temporary protection and to offer practical ideas about clear communication and solutions. We would, of course, be happy to meet at the time and location most convenient to you.

Yours faithfully,

Handwritten signature of Paul Power in black ink.

Paul Power
Chief Executive Officer
Refugee Council of Australia

Handwritten signature of Shabnam Safa in black ink.

Shabnam Safa
Chair
National Refugee-led Advisory and Advocacy Group

cc: The Hon Clare O'Neil, Minister for Home Affairs
cc: The Hon Andrew Giles, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

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