



NEARLY 20,000 REFUGEES SET TO APPLY FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCY

13 February 2023

Catholic Social Services Australia has welcomed today's announcement that the Albanese Government will provide a permanent visa pathway for existing Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) holders.

This is in line with the Government's 2022 election commitment and will give some 19,000 refugees the right to apply for Australian citizenship after having been "in limbo" for many years.

The change will give them the same rights as all other permanent residents, including social security payments, higher education loans, access to the NDIS, and the ability to sponsor family members to come to Australia.

The Chair of CSSA, Francis Sullivan, said the changes are long overdue and a victory for compassion and common sense.

"For too long, the politics around refugees has driven a wedge into our communities. Today's announcement will go a long way to bringing communities together and restoring the long-held Australian ethos of giving everyone a fair go.

"This will be life-changing for thousands of people who have fled wars, famines, and conflicts to build a better life in Australia as so many of our fellow citizens have over centuries."

Home Affairs Minister, Clare O'Neil, said only those who entered Australia before Operation Sovereign Borders started in 2013 and who hold or have applied for a protection visa are eligible.

"Anyone trying to enter Australia without a valid visa would be turned back or returned to their port of origin," she said.

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Andrew Giles MP said all people on TPVs and SHEVs have been found to be refugees and are owed Australia's protection.

"TPV and SHEV holders work, pay taxes, start businesses, employ Australians, and build lives in our communities- often in rural and regional areas.

"Without permanent visas, however, they've been unable to get a loan to buy a house, build their businesses or pursue further education. It makes no sense – economically or socially – to keep them in limbo."

The Government has committed \$9.4 million over two years to assist TPV and SHEV holders with the visa application process through specialist legal service providers across Australia.

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