

Mayor & Councillors,
[Insert Local Govt contact details]

[Insert Individual / group contact details]

Date.

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

REQUEST FOR REFUGEE PERMANENT PROTECTION ADVOCACY AT A MUNICIPAL, STATE & FEDERAL LEVEL

Many Australians are deeply concerned about the wellbeing of refugees living in Australia on Temporary Protection Visas (TPV -3 years) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEV -5 years). These visas are not permanent protection visas. They place refugees in a continual state of extreme stress, fearing that they may eventually be returned to the country from which they fled persecution.

[You/ your group's name] is requesting your advocacy, as a local government that is supportive of inclusive communities, and a Refugee Welcome Zone signatory.

[Note: If your local Council is not a Refugee Welcome Zone signatory, then omit the end of the previous sentence]

Advocacy is needed at Municipal, State and Federal levels to influence Federal Government and politicians across all parties to adopt a unified approach for the urgent transition of refugees on Temporary Protection Visas or Safe Haven Enterprise Visas to Permanent Protection Visas. It is in the best interest for ensuring a cohesive, strong, and safe nation.

[If your Council is a Refugee Welcome Zone signatory, remind them about what this means]

A Refugee Welcome Zone is an initiative of the Refugee Council of Australia where councils have made a commitment to welcoming and upholding the human rights of refugees, demonstrating compassion for refugees, and enhancing cultural diversity within communities.

In Australia there are approximately 18000 people who have been recognised as refugees under the UN Refugee Convention but only granted temporary protection visas of 3 to 5 years duration by the Federal Government, unlike the majority of refugees in Australia who experience the security of permanent protection.

Temporary protection visas require refugees to continually reapply for protection every few years. They are denied the right to be united with family and may be sent back to a country where they fear persecution. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has described these conditions as 'punitive' and noted their damaging effect on refugees' mental health.

[If there are people in your local area in this situation, include a paragraph about their plight.]

[If your local government or your refugee advocacy group has carried out any recent activities, then highlight these events/activities as an indicator of the interest and concern in your local communities about the treatment of refugees.]

Refugees have been welcomed into our local communities, befriended by faith groups, community groups, schools, neighbours, employers, and employees. Many refugees on temporary protection visas have been living and working in and contributing to our communities for over eight years and are valued people in the fabric of community life. We have been enriched by them.

To see our refugee friends suffering from the effects of the current temporary protection policy, the ongoing uncertainty in their lives, separation from family, and their increasing depression, has affected us greatly. There is no benefit to anyone – Australians or refugees- in continuing this policy of suffering. It weakens our society.

Councils play a unique and important role in building strong, socially cohesive communities, because they are the closest level of government to community.

[/ your group] ask [local govt name] to continue its commitment to welcoming and upholding the human rights of refugees. We ask you to do this through strong advocacy at Municipal, State and Federal levels to influence Federal Government and politicians across all parties to adopt a unified approach to transition refugees on Temporary Protection Visas or Safe Haven Enterprise Visas to Permanent Protection Visas, as a matter of urgency.

We would appreciate an opportunity for representatives from our group to give a short presentation to Councillors and staff about this issue. We have included some background information to give you a clearer understanding of this issue and our request for your advocacy.

We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Name & signature

Position, organisation's name.

Email address:

Attachments:

Give them a Future! Campaign for Permanent Protection for Refugees
Legacy Caseload Fact Sheet