



Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection

Mayor Roz Blades
Chair, Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum
Back Your Neighbour Campaign

Dear Mayor

Thank you for your letter to myself – and my Labor colleagues – in regards to the Liberals' cuts to the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) on behalf of the Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum.

It was a privilege to be invited to speak at the forum held at Greater Dandenong Council earlier this year – it fills with reassurance that people such as yourself, your colleagues, and the fellow Member Councils share such deep concerns about some of the most vulnerable people living in communities across Australia.

As you well know, I and my Labor colleagues also share these concerns.

This is why at the 2018 ALP National Conference, Labor committed to ensure people seeking asylum will have means-tested access to funded migration assistance, and to appropriate social services, including income, crisis housing, healthcare, mental health, community, education and English as a Second Language support during the assessment of the claim for protection.

Regrettably, from Opposition, we do not have the details required to fully interrogate the arbitrary, unjustified, and haphazard way the Liberals have gone about cutting support to come of the most vulnerable people living in our society.

If elected, assessing the true impact of the Liberals' cruel and callous SRSS cuts is a priority for Labor. I am acutely aware of the pressing nature of ensuring this vital support.

I would like to bring your attention to Labor's commitment to abolish Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs) which have left asylum seekers living in Australia in an unfair state of limbo. In government, Labor will place those found to be genuine refugees onto permanent protection visas – negating the need for SRSS for these individuals as their status will have been resolved.

For close to six years, the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government has treated asylum seeker issues – as well as genuine refugees – as a political tool.

It is clear the Liberals have played politics with the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in Australia for too long.

Only electing a Shorten Labor Government will stand up for fairness and treat asylum seekers living in Australia with dignity and humanity.

Thank you yet again for taking the time to write to me on this important issue and your ongoing advocacy.

Yours sincerely,

Shayne Neumann MP
Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection
Federal Member for Blair

2 April 2019