

BACK YOUR NEIGHBOUR

Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce
Supporting People Seeking Asylum



Our Mission

The Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum speaks up for thousands of residents who seek safety and refugee protection within our communities.

We are made up of **over 40 Local Governments nationally**, representing **6 million residents** and endorsed by **more than 50 community organisations**, volunteer groups and peak bodies.

The Taskforce welcomes the Federal Government's resolution of over 20,000 refugees on temporary visas to permanent visas. This has provided certainty for people seeking refuge in Australia, who have been living and working in this country for over 10 years.

8,000 more face the prospect of persecution and conflict in their homelands. Granting them permanent residency would provide safety and protection for children and families.

Those without work rights or access to basic support, face poverty and homelessness amidst a cost-of-living crisis. Charities and local governments are stepping in to help but cannot meet even their most basic needs.

On behalf of our communities, our 'Back Your Neighbour' campaign asks the Government to make a commitment to:

| What we need | How you can help us |
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| <h1>01</h1> <p>Provide people with a valid visa and the opportunity to work.</p> | <p>Currently, 2,500 people seeking asylum do not have a valid visa and work rights. As a result, many live in poverty while others work illegally to keep food on the table.</p> <p><i>Amrita, a young woman from India, has been on a Bridging Visa for 11 years. She is eager to support herself and was offered work as a cook at her local charity but without work rights, Amrita has had to rely on limited support from charities to survive: "The strict visa conditions of 'no work' has placed...enormous stress on me, especially on my mental health."</i></p> <p>By providing people with a valid visa and work rights, they can contribute their skills to our society, remain independent and stay engaged in the asylum process.</p> |



contact@backyourneighbour.com.au



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What we need

How you can help us

02

Expand access to health care, income support and essential services so people in crisis have basic support.

Approximately **5,000 people seeking asylum, including families with children, elderly and people with disabilities, currently face poverty and homelessness.** One in five of them receive a daily living allowance through the Federal 'Status Resolution Support Service Program', while the others receive no Federal income support.

Charities and Councils cannot meet the need for crisis assistance.

Maryan, a Burmese mother and her 5 children sought assistance from her local council. With no access to SRSS, she is always looking for work to make ends meet.

"We are struggling to keep up with paying for bills," she explains, "I am in deep need of financial support."

Council provided Maryan with a food voucher and temporary bill relief.

Expanding the eligibility criteria of the Status Resolution Support Service Program would ensure that people's basic needs are met, so they may live safely and with hopeful prospects for the future.

03

Grant permanent visas to people who have been refused a visa via the 'Fast Track' process.

People subject to the Federal 'Fast Track' assessment process have been **waiting up to 8 years** for a decision about their application.

8,600 people who have arrived over a decade ago to seek refugee protection **continue to live without safety and certainty.** This includes families with children who are Australian citizens and will be separated because the parents hold temporary status.

The Haidari family fled Afghanistan due to persecution. Their three children have permanent residency and recently completed university in Melbourne. Their father was medically evacuated from PNG to Australia on a Bridging Visa E. He lives with debilitating mental illness and will be separated from his family if forced to return to Afghanistan, where conditions have deteriorated.

Ending the uncertainty, by granting permanent visas to these 8,600 people, will at last resolve the matter, enabling them to rebuild their lives.

For more information, please contact our Administrator, Ann Ly:
ann@backyourneighbour.com.au



Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live and pays respect to all Elders past and present. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.



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