

A NEW DEAL FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

A proposal to trial in Tasmania the supported settlement of selected communities of Temporary Protection and Safe Haven Enterprise Visa holders in selected regional communities

*THE TASMANIA
OPPORTUNITY
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Executive Summary

In December 2014, the Australian Parliament approved legislation for Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Protection Visas (SHEVs) that would allow asylum seekers already in Australia on bridging visas to be able to live in the community for up to three years in the case of TPVs or five years in the case of SHEVs.

A New Deal for Asylum Seekers (New Deal) is a proposal to conduct a trial in Tasmania of the supported settlement of selected SHEV and TPV holders in preferred regional communities with the aim of encouraging similar projects across regional Australia.

New Deal builds on the success of other regional communities that have already demonstrated the economic benefits of the supported settlement of asylum seekers. Deloitte Access Economics (2015) report that the recent settlement of 54 Karen people in Nhill in Western Victoria has resulted in an economic benefit of more than \$40 million. ***New Deal*** would result in expenditure for accommodation, food, and clothing in country towns and regional cities. The government and the opposition support the settlement of refugees in regional areas.

New Deal targets employment sectors that have traditionally not been fully filled by the Australian workforce including fruit picking, vineyards, and aquaculture. According to the National Farmers' Federation, there are more than 90,000 unfilled jobs in rural areas. There appear to be many country areas that would welcome an increase in their population and a boost to their local economy. Improving the economies of regional Australia and increasing regional populations is in the national interest.

New Deal's design is evidence-based. Previous and current examples of asylum seeker settlements in regional Australia have been examined to determine best practise and sustainability. Wherever possible, ***New Deal*** will provide host communities with the existing skills and experience of asylum seekers. Host communities will be selected based on their demonstrated commitment and readiness to be welcoming and inclusive. Selected communities will then be further prepared and resourced. Wherever possible asylum seekers would be carefully selected based on skill and background and prepared for temporary settlement.

New Deal proposes Tasmania as an optimum location for initial trials and some of the ongoing placements. Tasmania is an ideal trial site, due to its size, previous successful asylum seeker placements of the Kosovo refugees and young male refugees, widespread community support, and well-established niche business expertise. ***New Deal*** is in Tasmania's economic and social best interest.

New Deal* has the broad support of a growing number of leaders and advisors.** A Statewide Leaders' Summit was held in Launceston on in November 2014. The gathering of over seventy political, business, NGO, and community leaders heard from well-respected proposal. ***New Deal has been developed using the support and input from the Summit.

***New Deal* reflects core Australian values.** Australians believe in protecting the rights of disadvantaged people at home and abroad and Australians have a deep sense of morality and justice. In the past, Australia has welcomed refugees fleeing oppression and persecution in Europe and in SE Asia and this has developed Australia's successful multicultural identity. The Australian Parliament has responded to the current crisis with over 30,000 asylum seekers in detention by developing a solution that involves temporary visas.

New Deal is a proposal to implement Parliament's solution in a controlled and humane manner. It gives ordinary Australians the opportunity to be part of a positive way forward in humanising refugee settlement for the national interest. Many of Australia's finest citizens are from maritime asylum-seeking entries in previous decades. Regional Australia needs and values such citizens.

***New Deal* makes Australia's refugee policy more responsible, safe, humane, and compassionate** at a time when the refugee crisis is escalating worldwide.

***New Deal* is a strategic win-win-win proposal.** Tasmanians, other Australians, and asylum seekers all benefit.

Glossary

Asylum Seekers – displaced people seeking asylum from persecution or war outside their own country. Not all asylum seekers will have necessarily been assessed as being refugees by UNHCR.

CALD Communities - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities.

Humanitarian Victims – people forced to flee from their home country because of extreme suffering (e.g. famine) but who do not fit the definition of a refugee.

Internally Displaced People – people who have fled their homes because of persecution or violence, but remain within the boundaries of their country.

LGA – Local Government Area.

Migrants – people who move between countries because of lifestyle, employment, or family connections, etc.

Non- Refoulement – A principle in the *UN Convention on the Status of Refugees* “of not forcing refugees or asylum seekers to return to a country in which they are liable to be subjected to persecution.” (Oxford Dictionary)

People Groups - an ethno-linguistic group with a shared self-identity. Asylum seekers are often minority people who do not identify with their ‘nationality’ (e.g. the Karen & Chin peoples from Myanmar).

Refugee Welcome Zone - a Local Government Area that has made a commitment in spirit to welcoming refugees into the community, upholding the human rights of refugees, demonstrating compassion for refugees and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in the community.

Refugees – asylum seekers assessed by UNHCR as having fled their country because of a reasonable fear of persecution.

Regional Australia - a term used by the Australian Government to promote non-urban areas of the nation, including for immigration.

Resettlement – the process whereby asylum seekers move from their country of origin through a transit country to a third host nation. About 1% of all asylum seekers are resettled.

SHEV - Safe Haven Enterprise Visa. SHEV holders commit to live in a regional area. SHEV holders may stay for up to five years.

TPV - Temporary Protection Visa. Contrary to the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, Australia no longer grants Permanent Protection Visas to those arriving without a visa. A TPV allows the holder to remain in Australia for up to three years, work, access Medicare, and potentially receive Centrelink benefits. The holder cannot sponsor other family members to immigrate and cannot leave and re-enter the country without permission.

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Selecting Regional Communities

Community engagement is critical. Broadbent (Broadbent R. et al., 2007, *The Relocation of Refugees from Melbourne to Regional Victoria*, Institute for Community, Ethnicity and Policy Alternatives, Victoria University, Melbourne (re Swan Hill and Warrnambool) shows on page 60 that a key factor in successful relocation is the active, effective involvement of the local council.

Regional local councils, initially in Tasmania and then across Australia, who are registered as a Refugee Welcome Zone will be encouraged to register for participation in the New Deal program.

The criteria required of regional communities when they apply to participate shall include:

- Demonstration of available and appropriate employment for TPV and SHEV holders
- Strong leadership in the community by local champions/influencers
- Council commitment to participate, including staffing and budgetary provision
- Council shall engage a reputable, experienced Australian company to consult in the setting up of the local program
- Council shall commit to employ a New Deal Program Coordinator to carry out all liaison with workplaces, employees and government, administration, training and support
- Community planning must take place before, at commencement, and on an on-going basis during implementation (Broadbent 2007, page 65)
- Broad consultation and education by Council within its community including on-going community education regarding the culture of the people group
- Demonstration of widespread community support and minimal negative reaction
- Physical facilities needed for cultural and community practices (e.g. prayer room, meeting space)
- On-going community services designed for the particular people group
- On-going celebration of cultures
- Based on a set of commitments developed in Warrnambool (Broadbent 2007, p. 66)

Council shall provide or facilitate:

- A welcome and orientation processes
- A package in the form of an agreement including:
 - At least one family member in employment within one month of arrival;
 - two months of rent (equivalent to \$200 pw);
 - amenity connection costs such as electricity, telephone, etc.; and
 - relocation costs assistance.

- Councils must commit to work with the state and Australian Governments to provide necessary resources and services.

Preparing Regional Communities

Community Readiness

Both the State and Australian Governments are keen to increase the settlement of migrants and refugees in regional Australia. Successful settlement has been achieved in numerous settings, reports, and reviews written. We know the proven ingredients required.

The Australian Government shall fund the development of selected regional communities to support Community readiness.

For successful settlement, community readiness requires:

Social Inclusion

- Strong leadership in the host community by local champions/influencers.
- Host community prepared for the new settlers.
- Support for families (partners, children, elders).

Freedom from discrimination and violence

- The degree and complexity of 'cultural adjustment' on both sides considered and managed.

Access to economic resources

- Employment – jobs available for the new settlers.
- Initial (short-term) accommodation.

Empowered Communities

- Community meeting space.
- Community worship space.
- Training in community governance and functioning.

See Appendix 1 for details.

Employment

All participating TPV and SHEV holders shall be afforded all the rights of Australian employees.

A reputable Australian company(s) already established in contracting migrant long-term workers in regional Australia shall be enlisted to consult each local Council in the setting up of the employment program.

To be accepted into the program, employers must provide basic conditions. Each workplace will have specific circumstances and conditions that need to be built into employment understandings.

Utilising a 10% levy of the base rate each Council shall contract or employ a New Deal Co-ordinator to oversee the program.

See Appendix 1 for details.

Housing

All participating TPV and SHEV holders shall be able to access housing on a similar basis to that of others in the Australian community. For New Deal, Housing Tasmania (Department of Health and Human Services) shall plan to meet the special housing needs of asylum seekers utilising both public and/or private housing stock. As other regional areas are brought into the scheme, further investment by State and the Australian Governments will be necessary.

See Appendix 1 for details.

Education

All participating TPV and SHEV holders shall be able to access public education on a similar basis to that of others in the Australian community.

Children of TPV and SHEV holders are likely to have special needs these may relate to physical and mental health issues (see the next section for details), language, cultural barriers and discrimination.

The Department of Education shall plan to accommodate the special needs of asylum seeker children and the additional numbers.

See Appendix 1 for details.

Health

All participating TPV and SHEV holders shall be able to access public health services, Centrelink, and Medicare benefits on a similar basis to that of others in the Australian community.

For the trial, the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services and Australian Government Department of Health shall plan to meet the special needs of asylum seekers as these needs relate to the relevant funding applied.

See Appendix 1 for details.

Selecting TPV and SHEV People Groups

Asylum seekers shall be settled in regional Australia according to their people group(s) and wherever possible where their skills and experience can be best utilised.

AMES Research and Policy and Deloitte Access Economics (AMES Research and Policy & Deloitte Access Economics, March 2015. *Small towns, Big returns; Economic and social impact of the Karen resettlement in Nhill*) offer eight factors that contributed to the success of the Karen resettlement in Nhill, three of which apply to the asylum seeker community (see previous section) and four that apply to the people group. These may need careful re-application in some settings.

To participate TPV and SHEV holders shall:

- participate in language, cultural and employment training;
- live in the specified rural town or regional city;
- report monthly to a designated Centrelink office or post office; and
- remain in the prescribed employment, study, or training.

Preparing TPV and SHEV Candidates

General

All adult TPV and SHEV holders shall have access to 300 hours of English language study and an orientation session to the geography, history, and culture of both Australia and the region to which they have been assigned.

Vocational

All adult TPV and SHEV holders shall have access to vocational preparation and assistance:

- Initial training to meet the employers' specifications;
- Workplace Health & Safety training;
- Formation of work parties of five (including a team leader with functional English);
and
- Provision of appropriate equipment and working clothes.

The Tasmanian Model

New Deal shall be piloted in two localities in Tasmania before being rolled out into other regional areas of Tasmania and where applicable mainland Australia. The pilot placements shall last for 12 months. Tasmania may remain part of the program beyond the trial period.

The Australian Government shall provide set-up funding for the pilot program so that all procedures and paperwork are developed, tested, and adjusted as needed.

A reputable, experienced Australian company shall be contracted to set up, manage, and evaluate the pilot program. Such companies shall also be contracted by Councils to provide support and advice in the implementation of local programs. [For example, Bright Employment, Suite 1, Level 2, 39 Queen Street, Auburn, NSW 2144; 02 9643 8851; enquiries@brighfhtemployment.com.au]

Advantages of a Tasmanian pilot program

The advantages in using Tasmania as a pilot program location for *New Deal* include:

- Tasmania has multiple rural sites within a small geographic area.
- Tasmania has rural areas within easy access of regional centres (services).
- The Tasmanian government has more to gain than any other state by a proposal to inject economic activity in regional areas.
- Tasmania has an excellent proven record of accomplishment in processing and settling asylum seekers, having repeatedly displayed high motivation, capability, and competence. Many Tasmanians and local councils have indicated strong desire for this opportunity to serve our state, nation, and neighbours in this way.
- There is widespread interest by individuals and local councils within Tasmania.

Benefits of *New Deal*

New Deal offers Australia a number of benefits:

a. Economic revitalisation of Regional Australia

The Australian government encourages temporary workers to seek employment in regional Australia. People who work in these areas can be granted extra points when applying for a resident visa. Working in regional Australia while holding a working holiday visa may allow the person to have their visa renewed.

However, such short-term workers such as 417 visa holders do not typically spend the bulk of their earnings locally and certainly do not join and contribute to the community.

Supported relocation of refugees into regional Australia would assist the revitalisation of regional Australia.

Deloitte Access Economics (2015) claim that local governments, especially in Victoria, have demonstrated interest in exploring opportunities to apply similar approaches to that in Nhill to growing their rural communities.

New Deal would increase scales of economy in state health, education, infrastructure and development departments, whilst increasing consumer spending and therefore the overall size of regional economies.

New Deal would strengthen existing government agencies and service organisations, enhancing outcomes for all local residents. There would be a focus on capacity-building investment and empowering small enterprises across multiple sectors, including agriculture, industry, tourism, and the arts.

b. Social revitalisation of Regional Australia

AMES Research and Policy and Deloitte Access Economics (2015) claim that the Karen resettlement provided a number of important social impacts in the Nhill area. The newcomers:

- i. Redressed the population decline for the township of Nhill, providing an almost 10% increase and lowering the average age. The injection of 49 children has had a significant impact.
- ii. Triggered revitalised local services and increased government funding. Council had developed a Karen Community Action plan and employed a Multicultural Liaison Officer. Other services provided by Council include interpreter services, taking the initiative to see appropriate service provision and funding for cultural events.
- iii. Boosted primary and secondary school numbers and viability. Cultural diversity has been seen by schools as having a very positive effect on the school community.
- iv. Revitalised the local Neighbourhood House and adult education with many new services added.
- v. Grew health services including maternal child health and healthy diet sessions.
- vi. Even contributed to increase funding for the Wimmera Development Association in nearby Horsham.
- vii. Increased bridging capital – networks of relationships that enable the sharing of information, ideas, and innovation.
- viii. Gave increased opportunities for volunteering – giving benefit to the refugees, the wider community and indeed to the volunteers themselves. Some Karen people are now actively volunteering.

ix. Have had a very positive influence by the values and behaviours they model.

Because housing is so much cheaper in Nhill than in the western suburbs of Melbourne, asylum seekers have approximately \$160 more discretionary spending per week. This is enabling home purchasing and a significantly improved standard of living. This had both financial and social flow-on benefits.

John Millington retired CEO of the company responsible for providing employment for the Karen, Luv-a-Duck, says, "The arrival of the Karen was a win-win situation for us and them."

c. Eradication of exploitation of foreign workers

Four Corners (ABC TV, 4 May 2015) claims that there is extensive exploitation of tens of thousands of foreign workers across parts regional Australia. Workplaces including chicken processing and fresh vegetable processing are reportedly under-paying short-term workers. One hourly rate quoted was just \$3.95 per hour. Working conditions are in some instances also extremely disturbing.

Member for Hinkler, Hon Keith Pitt, MHR (Nat), describes the conditions around Bundaberg, Queensland as being a 'slave trade'. Dr Joanna Howe, Senior Lecturer, University of Adelaide Law School, shares concern for foreign workers who are being 'routinely abused'.

There are also reports of widespread sexual harassment and sexual assault, verbal and racial abuse, and substandard housing.

Most famers reportedly do not want to participate in illegal and inhumane practices. However, they need to see their crops picked in good time.

Organised crime is reportedly involved in some places with some labour hire companies operating a black market. Some workers are on 417 visas, others have expired, invalid visas and or fake employment cards. Australia is losing significant tax revenue each year.

New Deal will bring a regulated ethical approach to fruit and vegetable picking etc. Having employees living locally will also make it harder for unscrupulous operators to remain in the market.

Councils could include in the brief of their *New Deal* program coordinator (see section 6 above) being a contact person for all employment complaints in the Council area. In these ways, such complaints can be reported in a timely manner to the appropriate authorities.

d. Australia's international reputation

Australia's reputation has been tarnished, especially in Asia, by its inhumane treatment of asylum seekers and its lack of cooperation with neighbouring nations. Foreign trade and tourism are enhanced by a positive international reputation.

New Deal offers a first step to restore Australia's standing in the region. *New Deal* treats selected asylum seekers humanely within the current policy framework.

e. Social harmony

Asylum seekers from rural backgrounds are more likely to settle well into regional communities. The experience in Nhill certainly points in this direction. Placing asylum seekers from rural backgrounds in large cities is a recipe for probable social disintegration – probably with a sizeable economic cost.

f. Summary

New Deal is a mutual, interpersonal, and developmental proposal, not just a charitable, nor just a financial, activity. There are five winners in this proposal.

1. Asylum Seekers: through implementation of the safe-haven concept, creating a humane and vocationally fulfilling role in which they have the protection of, and the opportunity to contribute to, the hosting community.
2. Local communities: through the enhanced diversity and social, vocational and economic value that safe-haven recipients bring; the capacity building and community cohesion generated in the process, the opportunity to make a historical and life-changing contribution and to model, especially to youths, how to create a culture of respect and care within society.
3. The State: through injection of federal funding into the State economy, plus the composite of all the aspects mentioned above.
4. The Nation: through redemption of our international reputation and its effects upon international trade and relations, benefits to our national culture, identity and narrative, etc.
5. The World: it has become indisputable in recent times that the behaviour of one nation has much broader resultant effects on the policies and practices of other nations. We face a growing international crisis, which will not quickly go away. Our small victories here can have vast, far-reaching and globe transforming effects through other nations.

Recognised Risks

- a. **In treating TPV and SHEV holders humanely, *New Deal* risks the arrival of more boats and therefore more deaths at sea.** Australia must balance its use of deterrence with its international obligations to treat refugees humanely. TPVs and SHEVs are part of the current policy mix that has been designed to deter asylum seekers. *New Deal* will implement current policy in a way that brings economic advantage to the nation.
- b. **'Economic refugees' may be increase in numbers.** TPVs and SHEVs are part of the current policy mix that has been designed to deter 'economic refugees'. *New Deal* will implement that current policy to Australia's advantage. Research confirms that the argument concerning economic refugees is overstated. Approximately 3-6% of all asylum seekers might be so classified (though the term is dubious under international law).
- c. **In the current economic climate, Australia cannot afford to spend more money on asylum seekers.** *New Deal* proposes only modest expenditure to revitalise regional Australia (whilst also treating asylum seekers humanely). This proposal is very modest compared with recent Operation Sovereign Borders expenditures.

Timetable

The Tasmanian Government would need to determine a satisfactory timetable for the *New Deal* pilot program.

Costings

The Tasmanian Government would need to determine costing for the *New Deal* pilot program.

Recommendations

1. **That the Australian and Tasmanian Governments commit to a 12 month pilot of the *New Deal for Asylum Seekers* program at two localities in Tasmania with a view to rolling out the program in other regional communities across Tasmania and mainland Australia.**

- 2. That the Australian and Tasmanian Governments develop a detailed project that determines and describes the timetable, budget and operational parameters to enable roll out of the New Deal Tasmanian pilot program.**

Appendix 1 Preparation of Regional Communities

The Australian Government shall fund the development of selected regional communities (initially Tasmania) to provide:

Community readiness

AMES Research and Policy and Deloitte Access Economics (2015) offer a number of success factors that contributed to the success of the Karen resettlement in Nhill, six of which apply to the receiving community. These may need careful re-application in some settings:

1. Employment – jobs available for the new settlers,
2. Strong leadership in the host community by local champions/influencers,
3. Host community prepared for the new settlers,
4. Initial (short term) accommodation,
5. Support for families (partners, children, elders), and
6. Degree and complexity of ‘cultural adjustment’ on both sides considered and managed.

Broadbent (2007) suggests three other ‘Factors in a Positive Settlement Experience’:

- Social inclusion;
- Freedom from discrimination and violence: and
- Access to economic resources.

Employment

The Department of Immigration & Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs noted in 2003 that successive governments set policies to increase the re-settlement of migrants and refugees in regional Australia. While successful traction seems to continually elude capture at a local level, employment is consistently a key factor identified in settling refugees in regional Australia (see also Multicultural Council of Tasmania, 2015, *Stay Here Survey: Perspectives on the factors contributing to migrants and refugees settling in Tasmania.*).

Landline (ABC TV, 3 May 2015) reported on the successful employment in rural Victoria of short-term seasonal labour from Vanuatu.

AMES Research and Policy and Deloitte Access Economics (2015) detail the very positive experience of approximately 160 Karen refugees settling in Nhill in western Victoria to work at Luv-a-Duck chicken processing plant. Although Nhill has some distinctive features (declining population and low unemployment) it is clear that as surmised in the AMES/Deloitte case

study “can both create the case for, and can inform planning of, resettlement in other Australian communities”.

Fifty-four Karen are directly employed by Luv-a-Duck, enabling other jobs to grow in the area. Deloitte Access Economics model the economic impact of this increased labour supply across the Hindmarsh LGA as being \$41.5 million in net value terms in 2015.

It is a critical tenet of the New Deal that participating TPV and SHEV holders shall be afforded all the rights of Australian employees.

Reputable Australian companies, already working in the area of contracting migrant long-term workers in regional Australia, shall be enlisted to support each local Council in the setting up of the employment program. This helps avoid the possibility of unexperienced, unskilled, or possibly unscrupulous employment agents or agencies affecting successful outcomes for parties and stakeholders of the pilot program.

To be accepted into the program, employers must provide:

- Full workplace health and safety induction
- Access to clean running water and toilet facilities
- Shaded areas for lunch and other permitted breaks
- On-site skills training sufficient so that each worker understands the specific requirements of the particular workplace
- Access for the local New Deal Program Coordinator to assist with additional training or to resolve any difficulties.

Utilising a 10% levy of the base rate each Council shall employ a New Deal Program Coordinator to oversee the program, including:

- Enlisting employers and negotiating contracts including:
 - Number of workers required,
 - Start and finish dates,
 - Brighter Pathways Wage Support Program for eligible employers,
 - Employee pay rates (employees shall receive 100% of their salary and superannuation, according to the appropriate Australian Award, e.g. Horticultural Award 2010),
 - Agreement to pay 10% of base rate to the program for oversight, training and support,
 - Training requirements (prior to commencement and on-job training),
 - Performance appraisal and, where needed, worker replacement process,

- Supervision processes, and
- Trouble shooting process;
- Finalising Workplace Health & Safety assessment of workplaces
- Providing work clothes and any necessary equipment
- Organisation of transport and team logistics on site
- Ensuring employers have in place suitable payroll system including timesheets, payroll and superannuation and provision for workers compensation, public liability, and professional indemnity insurance.

Flexibility of systems will need to be able to respond to the circumstances and situation with respect to each workplace and these will need to be built into employment arrangements.

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia has created a series of fact sheets aimed at encouraging greater awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity in Australian workplaces.

Housing

All participating TPV and SHEV holders shall be able to access housing on a similar basis to that of others in the Australian community. For the pilot program, Housing Tasmania (Department of Health and Human Services) shall plan to meet the special housing needs of asylum seekers. As other regional areas are brought into the scheme, further investment by state and federal governments will be necessary.

Education

All participating TPV and SHEV holders shall be able to access public education on a similar basis to that of others in the Australian community.

Children of TPV and SHEV holders are likely to have special needs as relate to their education. These relate to physical and mental health issues (see the next section for details), language, cultural barriers, and racism.

The Department of Education shall plan to accommodate the special needs of asylum seeker children and the additional numbers.

Health

All participating TPV and SHEV holders shall be able to access public health services on a similar basis to that of others in the Australian community.

All participating TPV and SHEV holders shall be able to access Centrelink and Medicare benefits on a similar basis to that of others in the Australian community.

TPV and SHEV holders are likely to exhibit higher levels due to trauma experienced both in their homeland, in transit and in Australia's offshore and on-shore detention centres. Psychologist Professor Patrick McGorry described detention centres as "factories for producing mental illness and mental disorder" (Cresswell, 2010). Psychologists refer to well documented psychological damaged caused by such lengthy detention (Murray, Davidson, Schweizer, 2008).

Wherever TPV and SHEV holders are settled, Australia is obliged as a civilised nation to provide medical and psychological assistance. Moreover, not to do so will inevitably result in economic, social, and reputational costs for Australia.

For the trial, the Tasmanian Department of Health shall plan to meet the special needs of asylum seekers. As other regional areas are brought into the scheme, investment in other places will be necessary.

Appendix 2 - Factors in a Positive Settlement Experience

Excerpt from Broadbent (2007)

Indicators to emerge in facilitating a positive settlement experience, noted by the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship, DIMA (2003), include induction programs that ensure that migrants and refugees receive support in basic settlement needs. Based on DIMA's review of settlement services for migrants and humanitarian entrants (2003) and the work carried out by the Refugee Council of Victoria (2001) a summary is provided below of characteristics that assist in positive refugee relocation programs. They have been grouped into the three key determinants of mental health that align the VicHealth 'Mental Health Promotion Framework' (2005). They are as follows:

Social Inclusion

Health Care (Counselling Services — mental health, medical care).

Education processes, which involve parents and guardians.

Adult English tuition- Supportive educational needs for refugees.

Supporting Religious/Spiritual needs whereby refugees have a place to worship and knowledge of burial procedures.

Providing access to support groups, peer networks, community refugee settlement schemes, and Migrant Resource Centres.

Responding to kinship needs that are culturally based and essential to wellbeing.

Recognising community groups assists in the fostering of social connectedness where a sense of identity and belonging is nourished.

Promoting, initiating, and supporting networks of civic engagement and sporting or social clubs.

Ensuring there are effective transport systems that are reliable and accessible to places of work, worship and community settings.

Involving both the host community and refugees in a range of social activities that celebrate and show case ethnic diversity and its richness to rural areas.

Valuing the social position of newcomers and adopting an inclusive approach to individuals assists in the creation of strong links between all stakeholders.

Cultivating the establishment of strong partnership ties that have at its centre the goal of procuring a sustainable and productive relocation program.

Establishing a review of current processes and programs for settlement procedures that assist in improving current practice and addressing short and long-term goals.

Working with and informing refugees of the necessary procedures needed to sponsor family members into Australia.

Freedom from Discrimination and Violence

Informing refugees of their legal rights and its impact on everyday life.

Providing adequate prayer sites to assist with diversity in spiritual practices, and recognising the need for alternative burial practices.

Ensuring that newly arrived refugees are provided with adequate resources in which to voice their opinions on matters that impact upon their wellbeing.

Ensuring that adequate and professional services are provided to refugees who require assistance in dealing with the trauma associated with their journey.

Providing a place for ethnic representatives to work with local governments, NGOs and other organisations where there is an establishment of partnerships across sectors. These partnerships can also help to dispel myths that are aligned with ethnocentrism and racist attitudes.

Access to Economic Resources

Employment assistance that can assist refugees in attaining not only financial security, but also job satisfaction.

Access to government benefits (Medicare, income support, rent assistance, Youth Allowance, Austudy, Sickness allowance, sponsorship of family members into Australia).

Informing and assisting refugees on how to access banks and how to effectively budget and manage financial resources.

Providing adequate housing needs that are stable and affordable.

Housing also needs to be located in areas where there is easy access to social support networks and employment.

Recognition of prior qualifications of refugees or the creation of pathways that can assist with retraining in professions previously held.

Supporting ongoing training where employers display initiative in increasing the skill base of new employees. Employers should also consider providing employees with English language classes on site.

Appendix 3 - An Introduction to TTO

The Tasmania Opportunity Association (TTO) was formed in mid-2014. The basic objects and purposes of the Association are to:

- build positive working relationships with organisations and networks committed to the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers;
- research and present information on issues relating to the needs and circumstances of refugees and asylum seekers;
- increase public awareness and media sensitivity towards refugees and asylum seekers in Tasmania;
- promote the development of just, humane, lawful and constructive policies towards refugees and asylum seekers by governments and communities, with a particular focus on Tasmania;
- promote the empowerment of refugee communities and individuals in Tasmania.
- support the capacity building of Tasmania's refugee sector;
- assist the Tasmanian government and inter-governmental organisations to formulate policy and improve support and services for refugees and asylum seekers in Tasmania; and
- assist the Tasmanian government to develop social cohesion and economic activity in urban and regional communities.

The work of TTO was originally directed toward the development of a proposal for an urgent transition towards a better framework for receiving, screening and where appropriate, settling asylum seekers in Tasmania and in so doing provide the Australian Government with an alternative to off-shore processing.

In late 2014 the Australian Government introduced a number of new measures that support Operation Sovereign Borders policy and regulations:

- 18 November: Immigration Minister Scott Morrison announced that Australia would no longer resettle refugees who attempt to come here via Indonesia.
- 5 December: Parliament approved the *Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Act 2014* Cwth (the **Asylum Legacy Act**). This legislation reintroduced Temporary Protection Visas (TPV) with a three-year time limit. It also introduced Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEV) with a five-year time limit.

- 21 December: The Minister announced that the Governments of Papua New Guinea and Nauru would assess the refugees remaining on Manus Island and Nauru respectively 'in accordance with agreements signed with both countries'.

These actions have made it extremely difficult for TTO to progress our original proposed goal to move off-shore processing to Tasmania and therefore the Association has re-assessed its options with the clear remit of continuing to meet the tenet of our 'objects and purpose'.

The "New Deal for Asylum Seekers" proposal builds on the work already undertaken by TTO and our members and supporters. This reflects the current view of other mainstream Australian NGOs that a 'small steps' approach that works from within the policy framework to influence and change Australia's current position with regard to asylum seekers and refugees will result in incremental improvements to the lives and well-being of all refugees.

This does not alter the mid to long term goals of TTO to see an end to Australia's current inhumane approach to managing this issue and the establishment of a better holistic national and international system to respond to this growing global catastrophe.

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