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Will Hodgman

Premier of Tasmania

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Will Hodgman, Premier

Safe Haven Enterprise Visa Program Begins

Tasmania opens its doors and its hearts today with the official commencement of the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa program.

Tasmania is now a designated regional zone, which means asylum seekers in Australia who have been granted a SHEV by the Federal Government can relocate to Tasmania.

Tasmanians is only the second jurisdiction to opt-in to the SHEV program and welcome asylum seekers under this scheme, along with the Liberal Government in New South Wales.

The Tasmanian Government has committed \$1.2 million over four years to establish a Safe Haven Hub, to operate as a first point of contact for SHEV holders coming to Tasmania to live and work or study.

The intention is the hub will provide support to both migrants and potential employers, and connect both.

The Tasmanian Government will also provide pathways to employment, interpreter support and additional settlement services.

We have also offered to accept an intake of Syrian refugees and we are working with the Federal Government on that initiative.

On Monday, I will meet with the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Committee chair Paris Aristotle, who is advising the Federal Minister for Social Services on enhancing the settlement of Syrian refugees.

Mr Aristotle is also meeting with community leaders, settlement providers, non-Government organisations and state and territory government departments to share information and assist in the collaboration.

An Inter-Departmental Committee on Settlement has been established to plan for the arrivals, while a community planning group is providing advice on services needed.

We are committing an additional \$1 million towards either the United Nations High Commission for Refugees response, or on-island support for refugees.

Tasmania stands ready to play its part and welcome an additional 500 refugees and asylum seekers to settle in our State.

This is a doubling of our usual annual intake, and above our per capita share of the 12,000 refugees that the Australian Government has indicated will come to Australia.

We believe migrant populations strengthen our communities and help build a socially inclusive society. They bring knowledge, skills and contacts, and often bring a strong work ethic and experience to make a major contribution to Tasmanian life as a whole.

Tasmania has a long history of a compassionate response to world crises, and a welcoming response to migrants. Already the community's response has been overwhelming and I've no doubt this will continue as we welcome those on SHEVs and other humanitarian entrants to our state over coming months.

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