



## Tasmania will be home to 500 Syrian refugees as Government commits \$1.2 million for support

By Rosemary Bolger and Ellen Coulter

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**The Tasmanian Government says it is prepared to accept up to 500 asylum seekers fleeing the Syrian crisis as part of its additional intake.**

Prime Minister Tony Abbott today confirmed Australia will resettle an extra 12,000 refugees from Syria and Iraq on a permanent basis, with the focus on women, children and families from persecuted minorities.

The State Government had been in talks with the Federal Government to accept up to 500 extra people on the newly created Safe Haven Enterprise Visas.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, Guy Barnett, said the State Government has confirmed with the Federal Government that it is prepared to accept asylum seekers and refugees on other visas as part of that additional intake.

That would be subject to financial support from the Federal Government.

"This is a crisis, we need to act. The community is concerned and fair enough," Mr Barnett said.

In a statement, Deputy Premier Jeremy Rockliff said he had advised the Federal Government that Tasmania was now in a position to formally sign the Safe Haven Enterprise Visa implementation plan.

Mr Rockliff said to support the SHEV arrangement, the Tasmanian Government was willing to invest up to \$1.2 million over four years to establish a Safe Haven Hub to provide additional settlement support to SHEV holders.

The Tasmanian Government will also contribute \$1 million to the UNCHR response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

The Federal Government is providing \$44 million.

### Support services 'stand ready' for extra refugees

Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) chief executive Kym Goodes said the state's response to the refugee crisis showed compassion.

"I think that Tasmania can be very comfortable that as a state both our government and population have stepped up to respond to this crisis in the last week," she said.

"I think we can all be proud of how quickly we've come together as a state to say we want to open our arms and welcome these people."

CatholicCare multicultural services manager James Norman said the groups assisted between 250 and 500 refugees in Tasmania through the federally funded humanitarian settlement services program.

"We as an organisation, and the many other service organisations that we work with, have the capacity to deal with an increase," he said.

"We've done it before and we know that other organisations and the broader community stand ready to welcome any extra people that are arriving."

**Topics:** refugees, community-and-society, states-and-territories, federal--state-issues, government-and-politics, tas

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