

ALP NATIONAL CONFERENCE - REFUGEE POLICY – Dec 2018

There were some significant changes announced regarding refugee policy and Labor now has adopted a number of refugee policies which are better than they have been for some years and that will, if implemented, improve the lives of thousands of people.

Summary:

- \$500 million over the next five years to support the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to improve orderly regional processing and resettlement in the region.
- Negotiate an agreement with New Zealand to resettle refugees there, in a deal similar to the one secured with the United States, and approach other suitable countries as well
- Additional places in the form of Community Sponsorship increasing to 5,000 per year over and above the government sponsored places.
- Adopt the crossbench's policy to move asylum seekers requiring medical attention off Nauru and Manus Island.
- Appoint a special envoy for refugee and asylum seeker issues to advance Australia's interests on refugee issues within the region.
- 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.

Also:

- Strengthened processes relating to LGBTI people seeking asylum.
- Time limit of 90 days on detention.
- Working with UNHCR and Indonesia to work through backlog of claims. Additional funding to UNHCR in Indonesia to support this.
- Protection for whistle-blowers.
- Safe Haven Enterprise Visas to be abolished and holders transitioned to permanent protection. **This is extremely significant and will affect at least 8,000 people currently living in Australia.**
- Abolish TPVs and holders to be transitioned to permanent protection. **This affects approximately 6,000 people currently living in Australia.**
- Independent oversight of the detention network.
- Independent children's advocate.
- Abolish the so-called Fast Track Process. This affects about 11,000 people currently living in Australia still waiting on decisions.
- Mandatory reporting of child abuse in detention.

Other positive aspects of ALP Platform:

- Increased intake to 27,000 a year.
- Family reunion.
- Reinstatement of the Refugee Review Tribunal.
- Recognition of the need to address the reasons for people to take a boat journey.