

MY NEW NEIGHBOUR:

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

A WAY TO BRING REFUGEES TO SAFETY IN AUSTRALIA

We have all watched on as successive governments have failed to deliver a fair, safe and orderly system for refugees. We have witnessed cruelty and abuse as a result of this failure and we have raised our voices loudly in response. But as 2017 came to a close we were all left with a question: where to from here?

It's time to start focusing on the solutions. It's time to start building power in your community and wielding it. Amnesty has a better plan for refugees to help you do this.

It's time to get to work – we can build safe and inclusive communities while welcoming those who need our help.

Shankar Kasynathan

Refugee campaigner

2018

Winning on this campaign is a long game with several steps. In 2018, our campaign will be asking communities around Australia to support community-led sponsorship.

Australia's current proposed community sponsorship program (CSP) is limited and expensive. It costs a minimum of 19,000 dollars just for the application alone, making it very difficult for average Australians to help. And for each privately sponsored refugee, the government wants to take one place away from Australia's annual refugee quota – depriving another person of the help they desperately need.

When it's expanded and improved, we know it can work. For 40 years Canadians have welcomed over 280,000 refugees into their neighbourhoods through community-led sponsorship. These people have arrived in Canada in addition to the annual humanitarian intake -- rather than maintain the status quo for refugees, a well-structured CSP like Canada's welcomes more people.

[Watch Shankar's video](#) about Australia's current Community Sponsorship Program (CSP) and how we can improve it to welcome more people to Australia.

Or read more about Amnesty's CSP calls.



How you have impact

Growing support in your community for alternative pathways for refugees and then lobbying your local council to also champion community sponsorship, will send our Federal Government a clear message: they need to create a fairer community sponsorship program now.

Theory of change: how do we win?



1. More Australians show support for alternative pathways for refugees.

A large ground swell of public support is demonstrated through individuals, community organisations and sporting groups publicly declaring their support for CSP (i.e signing onto the petition)

YOUR ACTION

2. Local councils across Australia start to voice their support locally for a Community Sponsorship Program and demonstrate local leadership by putting forward and passing a motion in support of community sponsorship.

SMALL WIN



3. The Government recognises the need to expand and improve the CSP program and **community sponsorship is in the 2019 budget**, with CSP places additional to the existing humanitarian intake.

CAMPAIGN WIN



"Working with local councils is not as daunting as you would think. Here in Wagga Wagga, our local action group has developed a good connection with our council. We invite councilors to attend our events, and we try to take them along with any campaign we might be running.



Gabrielle Robinson, Wagga Wagga convener

LET'S GET TO WORK:

READY TO WIN COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP FOR REFUGEES?

1. MAP YOUR COMMUNITY

[Attend training in your region](#) on how to map your community and have influence locally.

Do your homework ahead of the training and start to think about who is connected in your community. **Think sporting clubs, rotary groups, teachers etc.**

Start to get a sense of who is on your council and how your council works. Find out your council's past decisions or public positions on refugees. Lots of information is freely available to the public, such as minutes and agendas from meetings.

The better picture you build of your community in the beginning, the better you can plan how to collect signatures and increase pressure on your council.

2. BUILD SUPPORT ON THE GROUND

Set an overall target for how many signatures you need to present to your council. **Pick a goal that's ambitious yet achievable with some work – we need to make them take note!**

Start reaching out to the key players you identified in your community mapping exercise -- this is usually through holding events and activities that capture their interest!

Make sure you personally invite your council members to your activities.

Work with your local media to share positive stories about refugees in your community and why CSP is important.

Build partnerships with other orgs working on refugees in your area (remember to include ally organisations in your community mapping).

"We recognised that we needed to think about how to engage with a wider audience to make change for refugees and the scouts being a large community group who are well regarded seemed like a good place start. The Scouts have the ability to influence others within their community. They also cover multiple communities, giving us access to a wide range of people."

Michelle Hinton, WA Refugee group convener

Activity suggestions:

- Attend a local sporting club's awards night?
- Ask a local sporting team to host a human rights match?
- Hold a stall at your farmers' markets?
- Run a human rights session with your scouts group and encourage them to make it part of their citizenship badge?

3. DEMONSTRATE COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO YOUR COUNCIL

If you don't currently have a relationship with your local council:

Schedule a meeting with your local councillor to discuss their role in shaping communities, alternative pathways for refugees and the CSP model.

If your council is a [Refugee Welcome Zone](#), you could start your meeting discussing this. You can then segue to how much community support you've gathered for fairer community sponsorship, and letting them know about the positive conversations you've had with your community about it.

Provide them with the detail on CSP: the ['My New Neighbour' community sponsorship handout](#), and [frequently asked questions](#).

Provide opportunities for them to hear directly from refugees who have already settled in Australian neighbourhoods.

Give them a clear set of directives eg. "We'd like to ask you to pass a motion asking the Commonwealth Government to expand and improve its community sponsorship program." You can find all of [Amnesty's asks on CSP to local government here](#).

If you already have relationships with your council or they show interest in alternate pathways for refugees:

Meet with your contact or key council members to discuss what you need them to do i.e put forward and pass a motion in support of an expanded and improved CSP.

As above, demonstrate the support that exists in your community for alternative pathways for refugees.

Provide them with the detail on CSP: the ['My New Neighbour' community sponsorship handout](#), and [frequently asked questions](#).

Give them a clear set of directives eg. "We'd like to ask you to pass a motion asking the Commonwealth Government to expand and improve its community sponsorship program." You can find all of [Amnesty's asks on CSP to local government here](#).

Ask if you can attend a local council meeting to discuss with the whole council.

4. LET US KNOW HOW YOU WENT!

Hearing about your meetings with council members not only shows us all your great work, it helps inform Amnesty's meetings with Federal MPs. Please take time to [fill in the MP engagement form](#).

USEFUL RESOURCES Check the [Amnesty website](#) for:

- community sponsorship handout for local government
- frequently asked questions
- video explainer on community sponsorship
- [tips on avoiding burnout](#)
- petition sheets
- [activism training calendar](#)

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