



# MY NEW NEIGHBOUR: TIPS FOR WORKING WITH LOCAL COUNCILS

The My New Neighbour campaign is about people power – building visible community support for an improved refugee sponsorship program – and then demonstrating that change to political leaders.

Your aim is to get your local council to pass a motion in support of an expanded and improved community sponsorship program for refugees.

## Why?

Local councils provide leadership on social issues at a local level. This is reflected in the 150 local government areas that are already self-declared Refugee Welcome Zones, the many council-run programs and activities for social inclusion and settlement, and to celebrate diversity.

If we can get local councils to pass a motion in support of community sponsorship, and then those councillors send a letter to our political leaders in Canberra letting them know about it, we are demonstrating a public desire for change.

As of writing, more than 17 local councils have supported improving the community sponsorship program for refugees:

- ACT Legislative Assembly
- Albury
- Canterbury-Bankstown
- Darebin
- Fremantle
- Griffith
- Inner West Council (inner-west Sydney)
- Maribyrnong
- Monash
- Moreland
- Newcastle
- Randwick
- Wagga Wagga
- Whittlesea
- Wodonga
- Wollongong
- Yarra

## 1 Don't forget to bring your whole community on the journey

The more community support you can prove to your council, the more likely they will be receptive.

- Approach your local school for their support
- Approach local businesses and ask them to display their support with a poster.
- Approach sporting clubs and ask them to make a public statement of support on their social media.
- Hold activities in your community and collect signatures, so you can demonstrate the public will for welcoming refugees.
- Ask everyone you approach to also let the council know they support an expanded and improved community sponsorship program.

## 2 Gathered community support? Time to approach your local council! Ask them to:

- Pass a motion asking the Commonwealth Government to expand and improve its current refugee Community Support Program (CSP).
- Write to the Federal Government, including the Minister for Immigration David Coleman, asking them to expand and improve the CSP.



# Once your local council is on board...

Has your local council passed a motion for an improved community sponsorship program? Well done! Here's what to do next with your local council so that you leverage your success and get the Federal Government's attention:

- Follow up with the council and thank them for their leadership.
- If they haven't already, ask your council to write a letter in support of community sponsorship to the Federal Government, including the Immigration Minister, David Coleman.
- Ask your council to publish their support in their newsletter, website and social media, and send a media release to the local paper.
- Ask the council to encourage other community leaders to sign the petition or publicly support refugee sponsorship.
- Host an event to celebrate the council motion and invite your mayor to speak about why the council supported it. Don't forget to invite other local leaders – school principals, business owners and sports team captains.
- See if you can get a spot on local radio and ask your mayor to join you.
- Ask your council to promote community sponsorship with other councils they have relationships with.
- Ask them to work with the local Amnesty action group to facilitate conversations with the community about an improved community sponsorship program e.g. widely share the stories of former refugees who have contributed to your local area.



Read more about community sponsorship for refugees at [www.amnesty.org.au](http://www.amnesty.org.au)  
Found this tipsheet useful? [Consider making a regular donation.](#)

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