



**CHALLENGE
INJUSTICE.**

17 December 2021

The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Cc: The Hon. Alex Hawke MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs

Dear Prime Minister,

RE: Refugee Community Support Program

We are a group of former refugees who have been advocating for improvements to the current community support program. Together we form the 'Refugee Advisory Group' which is responsible for directing the work of the My New Neighbour campaign for Amnesty International.

Two years ago, following the release of the Shergold Review, we welcomed your Government's decision to review the current community support program for refugees in 2020.

This year, we welcomed the findings of that national review which supported our concerns of the current program and hopes for a new program.

Now we further welcome the pilot proposal introduced by your government, which puts in place improvements to key areas of concern: cost and eligibility, for a limited cohort within the existing quota.

We recognise there are currently only a few pathways for refugees to find a safe home in Australia. Which is why we welcome the commitment of your government to propose this pilot scheme, and we hope that it goes well.

We must share with you however, some continuing frustrations with the current program.

To fully harness community generosity that can help refugees, Australia's private sponsorship program needs to be additional to your humanitarian intake.

Right now, we have the opportunity to help celebrate the refugees in our communities and call for sponsorship of others who want to call our community home, when it is no longer safe for them to continue living in theirs. The Government, of course, retains control of the program, but the community has the opportunity to welcome and successfully integrate new refugees into their own communities.

On behalf of a number of communities who have brought this matter to your attention since 2018, we call on your government to build a more generous, affordable and impactful Refugee Community Support Program which:

1. Does not take places from others in need
2. Creates more places for people in need of protection to integrate and settle in Australia
3. Celebrates and leverages the good will in the Australian community to welcome more refugees and ensure they thrive.

For further information, or to discuss and organise a meeting, please contact Veronica Koman at veronica.koman@amnesty.org.au or 0450 179 838.

Yours sincerely,

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