



April 2022

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?”

Isaiah 58: 6

16,500 additional places for refugees from Afghanistan, but more is needed for refugees and people seeking asylum

The UCA President Rev Sharon Hollis and other Christian leaders welcome the Australian Government's commitment in the 2022 Federal Budget to take in an additional 16,500 humanitarian places for refugees from Afghanistan over the next four years. This is a significant commitment following advocacy from the Afghan community and many others including the Uniting Church. Also welcome, is support for displaced Ukrainian people arriving in Australia. However, the Government continues to direct funding to offshore processing with \$482.5 million allocated for its offshore processing policy in 2022-23.

“We continue to be deeply concerned that significant funding is still directed to offshore processing of refugees which we believe could be much better used in other refugee assistance programs,” said Rev Hollis.

Organisations in the refugee sector, such as Refugee Council of Australia and Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, have welcomed the Federal government's decision to provide [new temporary protection visas](#) for those fleeing Ukraine. The new Temporary Humanitarian Concern visa (subclass 786) will allow Ukrainian refugees to work, study, access Medicare and receive other supports. Despite this announcement being positive for those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, advocates highlighted [the struggle and hardship for many others face who flee conflict and seek safety in Australia](#). As the conflict in Afghanistan remains ongoing, many [Afghan refugees in Australia who are kept on temporary protection visas are concerned for the safety of their families](#) and question whether they will ever be able to reunite.

The Refugee Council of Australia has estimated that [28,382 visas have been lost since 2020](#) under the Morrison Government.

What You Can Do

- Email your local MP ahead of the upcoming election, and urge the Federal Government to reinstate the humanitarian visas that have been lost since 2020 through the [Refugee Council of Australia's online advocacy action](#).
- Take the [pledge](#) to stand with refugees for freedom, protection, safety and humanity this election.
- Take part in Adelaide Palm Sunday Peace & Justice for Refugees Walk on 10th April: Gather at Tarntanyanga/Victoria Square from 1.30pm for a 2pm start
- Volunteer to provide practical support for newly arrived Afghan refugees in Adelaide. For information, check out Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia website [here](#).
- Join and/or support [Circle of Friends](#) (cofa.org.au): Currently, the Afghan Emergency Circle is looking for people to support one family of whom one speaks English, and one single woman without any English. If you would like to volunteer, please email Circle Convenor [Monica](#).



Our vision

We are a nation of diverse cultures, languages, faiths, ethnic groups and experiences. We celebrate and value the strength of this diversity. We see this diversity reflected in our leaders, key decision makers, institutions, industry, sports and media. We are a compassionate nation, where every person who seeks refuge here is treated fairly and made to feel welcome and safe – regardless of their country of origin or mode of arrival.

Our context

Australia's immigration policies continue to leave some people in indefinite detention. Some refugees and asylum seekers have been in offshore and onshore detention for up to nine years. As of April 2022, across the country, it is estimated more than 30 people are being held in detention, and 100 people remained in PNG and 105 on Nauru. The Government continues to direct funding to offshore processing with \$482.5 million allocated for its offshore processing policy in 2022-23. It is estimated that [28,382 visas have been lost since 2020](#) under the Morrison Government. Now we have the lowest Refugee and Humanitarian Program in 45 years – all while serious conflicts are escalating in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Ethiopia and now Ukraine.

For the election

As you consider your vote, you might like to begin a discussion or approach your candidates about

their policies on the following key actions:

- An end to mandatory and indefinite off-shore and on-shore detention either in Alternative Places of Detention (hotels) or detention centres.
- Community detention of refugees and asylum seekers must allow access to education, work and housing support.
- Provide a pathway to permanent protection for those who have been languishing in limbo for nearly a decade on temporary protection visas and expediting family reunification applications from thousands who remain separated from their loved ones.
- Permanent protection for Afghan people already in Australia but on temporary visas.
- Enhance safeguards for people on temporary visas including overseas students and migrant workers.¹

For more information:

For additional context and other areas of concern including community refugee sponsorship, processing of protection claims and developing regional solutions see:

[Our Vision for a Just Australia: A Welcoming, Compassionate and Diverse Nation:](#)

Further reading

[The Federal Budget: What it means for refugees and people seeking humanitarian protection](#)

[Calls for more Compassion and Places for Afghan Refugees](#)

[CHRISTIAN LEADERS WELCOME LIFT IN AFGHAN REFUGEE INTAKE](#)

¹ <https://www.migrantworkers.org.au/livesinlimbo>