

Statement from Church Leaders on TPVP's

This statement below was published by a national group of faith leaders on Friday 29 April 2022 at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne. It was sent to Prime Minister The Hon Scott Morrison MP and Opposition Leader The Hon Anthony Albanese. We will share details of their response once received.

Statement from Australian faith leaders on Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and other temporary forms of humanitarian protection for refugees in Australia

We urge our political leaders to reconsider the needs and futures of people who are still on Temporary Protection Visas. It is time to offer people on TPVs permanent protection. We raise this matter cautiously, mindful of how fraught discussion of such matters has been in previous Federal Elections.

But we must speak because compassion and care for others are universal values shared by all major faith traditions. As people of faith, we bring this perspective to our consideration of all things, including public policy around protecting refugees and people seeking asylum. Hence, we advocated for and welcomed recent steps to release most Medevac refugees from hotel detention; to move forward with the New Zealand resettlement plan; and to increase the number of Afghan refugees being offered protection.

We speak now, relatedly, out of deep concern about the current division between the two major parties on the issue of temporary protection visas.

These TPVs serve no public policy purpose and have lost community support since their introduction two decades ago.

Our pastoral knowledge is of people who have been living with stressful insecurity on TPV's in communities around Australia. We hear their prayers and know their fears. Having sought refuge, they just want to belong and contribute. With their families and friends, they are part of community groups and neighborhoods. Many have found jobs, work hard, pay their taxes, and have embraced Australia as their home.

COVID-19 has required many rethinks and reminded us all of what is truly important in life. There is a wonderful opportunity for our political leaders to now embrace a group of people who want to put down roots, build lives and work hard for Australia's best future. Like generations of migrants and refugees before them, this group will become an integral part of the Australian story.

It is as a voice for the relatively voiceless that we are moved to write to Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese in support of a more unifying and compassionate national policy on this important matter.

List of signatories *(updated 2 May 2022)*

- Sister Brigid Arthur, The Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project
- Bishop Paul Barker, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
- Dr Greg Barton, Deakin University
- Dr Makarand Bhagwat, President Hindu Council
- Dr Graeme Blackman, President, Victorian Council of Churches
- Rabbi Gabi Kaltman, ARK Centre
- Tamara Domicelj, Country Director Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Australia, co-Chair of the Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum
- Bishop Gieve Blackwell, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
- Revd Sandy Boyce, Executive Officer, Victorian Council of Churches
- Fr. Frank Brennan SJ, Rector Newman College
- Rev Keiron Jones, Anglican Parish of Flinders and Balnarring
- The Hon. Diana Bryant, AO, QC

- Revd David Bullock, Director of Mission and Ministries, Baptist Union of Victoria
- Professor Des Cahill, Religions for Peace Australia
- Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ, Bishop emeritus Diocese of Port Pirie
- Dr. Leslie Cannold, author and ethicist
- The Most Reverend Geoff Smith, Archbishop of Adelaide and Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia
- Mr Tim Cartwright, APM and Advisory Board of the Australian Intercultural Society
- Revd Debra Saffrey-Collins, Head of Chaplaincy and Diocesan Partnerships, Brotherhood of St. Laurence
- Fr Peter Hosking SJ, Saint Ignatius' College Adelaide
- Revd Tim Costello, Executive Director of Micah Australia
- Dr Diana Cousens, Vice Chair, Buddhist Council of Victoria
- Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen, Bishop of Parramatta and Chair of Catholic Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service
- Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Brisbane
- Bhakta Dasa, International Society for Krishna Consciousness
- Fr Christopher Horvat SJ, Superior of Adelaide Jesuits
- Imam Alaa Elzokm, Imam of West Heidelberg Mosque
- Adel Salman, President Islamic Council of Victoria
- Michael Kelly SJ
- Celia Andrews, Anglican, Perth
- Julie Edwards, Chief Executive Officer Jesuit Social Services, Co-Chair of the Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum
- Dr Adrian Evans, Emeritus Professor of Law, Monash University
- Paul Fyfe SJ, Parish Priest Canice's Kitchen and St Canice Catholic Parish, Sydney
- Ms. Wendy Francis, on behalf of Australian Christian Lobby
- Rabbi Ralph Genende
- Revd Scott Holmes, Chaplain at the Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Bishop Philip Huggins, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
- Mark Raper, SJ, Myanmar Jesuit Region
- Mr. Ahmet Keskin, Executive Director of the Australian Intercultural Society
- The Very Revd Dr Andreas Loewe, Dean of Melbourne
- Dr. Mohamed Mohideen, Islamic Council of Victoria
- Bishop Kate Prowd, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
- Fr Nguyen Viet Huy SJ, Holy family Emerton Jesuit Community
- Dr Susan Riley, Former Deputy Lord Mayor, City of Melbourne
- Revd Helen Summers, Director, The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne
- Jasbir Singh Suropada, Chairperson, Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria
- Barney Zwartz, Senior Fellow of the Centre for Public Christianity
- Harold Zwier, Jewish community
- Brenton Jayatilaka, Anglican Parish of City on a Hill
- Revd Gemma Baseley, Anglican Diocese of Perth, Social Responsibility Committee
- Br Peter Carrroll FMS, President Catholic Religious Australia
- Brendan Byrne, SJ, Professor Emeritus of new Testament, University of Divinity
- Shaykh Mohammad Ramzan, President Victorian Islamic Commission of Research, Fatwa and Charity
- Rev. Charles Balnaves, PP