



24 August 2021

Hon Alex Hawke MP
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship,
Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Hawke,

Thank you for granting over 300 Afghan nationals and family members Safe Haven Enterprise (SHEV) visas, and ensuring that most of them have already arrived in Australia.

Like many Australians, we are increasingly alarmed at the potential harm or death that may come to those Australian citizens and Afghan nationals who worked with Australian personnel and are now stranded in Afghanistan.

These people have demonstrated their belief in Australia as a generous country of freedom and opportunity. It is now our responsibility to provide them with a safe refuge. They do not belong in detention centres or on uncertain Temporary Protection Visas.

We realise that Australian defence personnel have been deployed to Hamid Karzai International airport. We are praying that they return safely with Australian citizens and Afghans who have supported our country, often in dangerous roles.

We are concerned that the Government, at this stage, is only offering 3,000 visas to Afghans seeking safe haven in Australia. We strongly encourage the Government to expand the Humanitarian Visa program, similar to the Abbott Government's 2015 decision to permanently resettle 12,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Australia.

We are keen to know how the Government might roll out the expanded program, what timeline is being considered and what would be the role for civil society groups in Australia-based resettlement programs?

Of the 4,200 Afghan nationals currently living in Australia on temporary protection visas, we ask that permanent residency be granted to those who are eligible as soon as possible. We are heartened to hear that the Government will not require these people to return to Afghanistan.

Australia Yearly Meeting

The Religious Society of Friends
(Quakers) in Australia Inc.
Incorporated in the ACT
PO Box 4035
Carlingford North NSW 2118
Australia

M: 0423 308 550
E: secretary@quakersaustralia.info
www.quakersaustralia.org.au
ABN 16 036 715 933

What additional support will the Government provide to the humanitarian visa and resettlement programs to carry out this work? What, if any, impact would this have on humanitarian visa holders currently living in regional International Organisation of Migration resettlement camps, waiting to come to Australia?

The Government also has a critical responsibility to engage with, and support, the Australian Afghan and Hazara communities who have legitimate and grave fears for their families still in Afghanistan. How does the Department of Home Affairs intend to strengthen their community engagement programs to meet this need?

We realise that this is a rapidly changing and volatile situation. However, we are hopeful that the Government will not shirk its responsibilities in providing a safe refuge and future to those Afghans who have stood alongside Australian defence, diplomatic and civil society personnel.

Yours sincerely



Ann Zubrick
Presiding Clerk
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

Australia Yearly Meeting

The Religious Society of Friends
(Quakers) in Australia Inc.
Incorporated in the ACT
PO Box 4035
Carlingford North NSW 2118
Australia

M: 0423 308 550
E: secretary@quakersaustralia.info
www.quakersaustralia.org.au
ABN 16 036 715 933