



TPV: Temporary Protection Visas

STARTTS is delighted to report that the most recent budget has delivered something that we have been wanting for a long time. It was recently announced that the Rudd government will finally abolish the Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) Scheme that has forced thousands of refugees into a state of permanent limbo, living in Australia without hope or certainty.

Under the scheme, asylum seekers to Australia were only eligible for temporary, three year protection visas and had to build a life here despite the knowledge that they may be sent back when their time had expired. On top of this crippling uncertainty, people on TPVs had no travel rights, reduced access to refugee settlement services such as English language programs, employment and income assistance, and could not be reunited with other family members.

The TPV program was a disastrous policy for refugee communities in Australia, leaving families separated and vulnerable for many

years. It also had very damaging effects on the mental health of many TPV holders, as they were denied the opportunity to rebuild their lives in Australia with the security and support they deserve.

This announcement means that not only is Australia finally doing its part to help ease the global refugee crisis, but that close to 1000 refugees will now finally have the security to rebuild their lives in Australia, with access to a full range of government services and support. Refugees can hope for a brighter future, and we can be sure that Australia will benefit from their enhanced ability to contribute to our society. ■