

Subject: Review of Australia's Community Support Program (CSP) for Refugees

I am Fr Arnold Heredia. I am delighted that the Australian Government is reviewing the Australian Community Sponsorship Program (CSP) for refugees. This matter is important to me as it is for many Australians. I write to you with the insight from a diverse group of stakeholders to the CSP. They are Australian community leaders, organisations and international partners. All who highly rank the importance of improving the Australian CSP.

Since the end of World War II, Australia has had a commitment to resettlement of people from all over the world. Immigrants came to Australia in search of a better life. In doing so they have made enormous contributions to our nation, which has often been acknowledged.

Unfortunately, in contrast with this magnanimous policy, today we see very limited pathways for refugees to find a safe home in Australia. One of these avenues is the CSP. We commend your government's commitment to review and improve this program.

As you may be aware, there are significant drawbacks in the current CSP, that inhibit the Australian people from taking part as sponsors. These drawbacks render the implementation of the CSP virtually impossible. The objective of this submission is to request that our government implement a more amenable and humane approach to the implementation of the CSP which:

1. Is affordable and sustainable
2. Does not disadvantage others in need
3. Allows community, families, donors and businesses to act as sponsors
4. Provides appropriate support and services
5. Creates more places with more appropriate eligibility criteria for political/religious vulnerable people to settle and integrate in Australia

I was a founding member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, a national organisation bringing together politicians, lawyers, human rights advocates and members of the Pakistani community. From this experience, I know great things can happen when we all work together. And that is fundamental point. For a system or policy to work effectively, all its components must function in unison.

The components of a successful Refugee Community Support Program are:

1. Willing individuals, families, communities and organizations with the drive and capacity to engage in private sponsorship.
2. A hospitable environment where newcomers can establish themselves, acquire a self-sufficient livelihood.
3. A feasible governmental framework that allows and encourages Australians to engage with sponsoring refugees.

In this submission I will elaborate on each component, presenting knowledge from each of the stakeholders that are in support of improving the Australian CSP.

Australians have the Drive and Capacity to engage in private sponsorship

I have been a priest in Australia for 19 years, across many regions of the Melbourne Archdiocese. In my career, I have been able to gauge the empathic stance of these communities. I know from this experience that people in Australia are generous, as they themselves, have been blessed with the goodness of this country.

I am not the only observer of our communities' generosity. In liaising with Parish Priests across the City of Knox, they have also received this feedback from their communities. Hearing that the Australian Government was reviewing the CSP, they have eagerly pledged their support to remove the barriers that bind and hold back the empathy of their communities (Please see attached supporting letters). The Parish Priests I have liaised with are listed below:

- Fr. Sebastian Mappilaparambil, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Bayswater
- Fr. Joseph, St Luke's Parish, Wantirna and Wantirna South
- Fr. Thomas Kuruvila, St John the Baptist Parish, Ferntree Gully
- Fr. Mirek Knap, Boronia Parish and The Basin
- Fr. Mark Reynolds, Scoresby

Through Parishes like these, resources to support refugees can be found and accessed. I am sure you are aware of other long-standing organisations such as Caritas Australia, Anglicare and the Catholic Social Services Victoria, which are purposed for such activities. There are even enthusiastic individuals and groups who are ready to coordinate fundraising campaigns and be a part of the support network for refugees.

Australia is a hospitable environment for newcomers: An example of employment potential

This goes without saying. Australia is a wonderful country with a friendly people. We have been blessed with a healthy economy and a well-developed infrastructure. One major aspect of being a hospitable environment for newcomers, is the ability to become self-sufficient. A major contributor to this is employment.

An example of the employment potential in Australia, comes from liaising with the Northern Territory Farmers Association. They have indicated that refugees would definitely be considered for employment in NT farms. A new channel of workforce supply would be welcomed based on the following factors:

"NT Farmers aims to increase Territory agricultural production to \$600M by 2025 and \$1B by 2030, to help Australia achieve its national industry target of \$100B."

"Due to the strong demand for Territory agricultural produce and the already tight labour market, industry is facing significant workforce supply issues."

In their statement, which has been attached to this submission, they go on to state:

"It is well known, the effect that Coronavirus has had on the workforce within our industry. A portion of our future workforce will also be dependent on future international travel restrictions. If these people in need can be sponsored and supported by the Australian community, we see a potential to offset the reduction in workers we have experienced during 2020."

A feasible governmental framework

All the stakeholders that are involved in this submission have stated that an improved governmental framework will engage the Australian community and make the CSP successful.

“To fully harness community generosity that can help refugees, Australia's private sponsorship program needs to be designed in a way that encourages, not hinders, more people to take part, and that unlocks the welcome that exists in the Australian community.”

~Parish Priests within Knox jurisdiction of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

“With a feasible CSP, Australian communities and organisations will be able to engage with it. For the resulting people who are accepted into the Australian community, we can state that they would be considered for work by farmers in the Northern Territory.”

~Northern Territory Farmers Association

A Model Private Sponsorship Program and an Example Application

All of the above Parish Priests are in support of Links & Consolidation Network (LinCoN), an organisation of which, I am a founding member. LinCoN seeks to assist persecuted Christian minorities, who have fled their country to escape being lynched by militants. The majority of asylum seekers in LinCoN's cohort have not meet UNHCR requirements due to technicalities, rather than a lack of authenticity. As a result, they live in exile, in inhumane conditions, hoping for someone to extend a helping hand as all other options have been exhausted. The program now has international outreach with established links with church-based agencies, in Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver, Canada. Some of the asylum seekers who approached LinCoN have been accepted into Canada via their Private Sponsorship for Refugees (PSR) program.

“Fr Arnold Heredia established contact with us in 2017. Since then he has sent us a couple of applications for asylum, which we have approved and sent for due processing.”

~Ministries and Outreach Office, Archdiocese of Vancouver

This is possible due to the agreement held between Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and the Canadian Immigration department (IIRC). This agreement allows for scrutinization of an asylum seekers case to determine authenticity.

“Under the Special Agreement Holders programme with the Canadian Government, we screen every application to ensure that it meets IRCC's guidelines. Once that has been determined, we forward the case for processing to IRCC.”

~ORAT, Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto

Our interactions with partners in Canada has provided very useful insight in how the Canadian PSR program functions. This a very effective program that Australia can and should aspire to. Its success can be accounted for by:

- Its robust eligibility criteria and screening processes
- Its financial viability
- Its integrated support and services
- Its encouragement of the Canadian community to engage in sponsorship

- The strong integration outcomes facilitated by the community engaging with newcomers.

The Office of Refugees Outreach in the Archdioceses of Calgary, Vancouver and Toronto have provided me supporting letters with details

- On how the Canadian PSR program works
- The response of their communities when such a program is available.
- The handling of asylum seeker cases which have been dismissed by the UNHCR based on technicality.

In summary

Throughout my career as a priest, I have been exposed to the plight of people who are in genuine and desperate need of help. Australia is a country that is very much capable of providing that support which you and I have been also blessed to have received. There are families, communities and organisations here in Australia that are ready to engage in a humane and an amenable Community Sponsorship Program.

Australia actually stands to benefit from these refugees. When a person who has fled their communities, their homeland, it is not only heart breaking, but also takes resolve and courage. When they are accepted, nurtured and supported by a new community, that resolve and drive translates itself into a success story.

“Research has demonstrated the strength of the PSR program. 55% of refugees sponsored by private sponsors are self-sufficient in their first year of sponsorship (i.e., they are employed and earning sufficient income to meet their needs), while 90% of refugees resettled through the Canadian government programs (referred by UNHCR) continue their reliance upon government social assistance (welfare services) well beyond their first year of settlement. The stronger integration outcome of the PSR program can be attributed to the strength of the support that is being provided to the newcomer, by the family member or the parish community that has sponsored them. It is this level of emotional, social, and practical generate such strong integration outcomes.”

~Rudy Ovcjak, Director, Office of Refugees, ORAT, Toronto

In rural Australia, we are experiencing a shortage in the workforce. This has been expressed by farmers around the country, whom in some cases have been forced to leave produce to rot in the fields. Many of the asylum seekers from the LinCoN program cohort, would be adequately suited for such jobs as they belong to the worker class. We have attained feedback from the NT Farmers Association that states that refugees would be considered for work across a wide range of jobs.

As a founding member of LinCoN, I represent a cohort of refugees, many of whom have been assessed unfavourably by the UNHCR due to technicalities rather than credibility. These people too, should be granted due process without being left behind. It is possible, as demonstrated by our friends in Canada. As there is a functioning framework that feasibly allows such a triage process, then it should be implemented here in Australia.

I thank you for your consideration. If there is any need for further information, discussion, clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

Fr Arnold Heredia

Address: 256 Queens Parade, Fitzroy North, VIC 3068

Mobile: 0439 401 878

Attachments:

- 1. Letters of support from 5 Parish Priest within the City of Knox**
- 2. Letters from 3 Refugee Community Sponsorship Programmes, Canada**
- 3. Letter from the Northern Territory Farmers Association**

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Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Bayswater

25 Orange Grove, Bayswater, Victoria 3153

Phone: 03 9729 2622

Email: bayswater@cam.org.au

Website: www.ololbayswater.org.au

ABN 74 577 483 345

The Honorable Alan Tudge
Minister for Citizenship & Multicultural Affairs

Subject: Support for Australia's Refugee Community Sponsorship Program

Our parish/community in Aston welcomes the Government's decision to review the current community support program for refugees in 2020.

We recognise there are currently only a few pathways for refugees to find a safe home in Australia.

One of them is community-led resettlement through community sponsorship. Our community welcomes the commitment of your government to increase the number of places that are available. There are however some significant issues with the current program.

To fully harness community generosity that can help refugees, Australia's private sponsorship program needs to be designed in a way that encourages, not hinders, more people to take part, and that unlocks the welcome that exists in the Australian community.

Private sponsorship of refugees needs to be affordable, sustainable and improved.

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 is in charge of welcoming and integrating new refugees into their own communities.

Our new neighbours are asking for our help. As a generous country we can and should do more.

On behalf of a number of community organisations who have brought this matter to our council's attention, as well as the broader community, I call on your government to build a more generous and more accessible Refugee Community Support Program which:

1. Does not take places from others in need
2. Provides appropriate support and services
3. Is affordable and sustainable
4. Allows community, family and businesses to act as sponsors
5. Creates more places for people in need of protection to integrate and settle in Australia

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Sebastian Mappilaparambil
Parish Priest
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish
Bayswater, VIC 3153



Boronia Catholic Parish

Phone: (03) 9761 2124

Email: boronia@cam.org.au

PO Box 505, Boronia, Vic, 3155



Support for Australia's Refugee Community Sponsorship Program

To the Minister for Citizenship & Multicultural Affairs — Alan Tudge,

Our parish community in Aston welcomes the Government's decision to review the current community support program for refugees in 2020.

We recognise there are currently only a few pathways for refugees to find a safe home in Australia.

One of them is community-led resettlement through community sponsorship, our community welcomes the commitment of your government to increase the number of places that are available. There are however some significant issues with the current program.

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4. Allows community, family and businesses to act as sponsors
5. Creates more places for people in need of protection to integrate and settle in Australia

Yours sincerely,

Fr Miroslaw Knap CR PP

St. Joseph's: 212 Boronia Road, Boronia, 3155

St. Bernadette's: 1264 Mountain Highway, The Basin, 3154

Member of the Knox Deanery - Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne



ST JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH

19 Forest Road, Ferntree Gully, 3156

Telephone 9758 1029

Email: office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au

To,

The Hon Alan Tudge Minister of Immigration, Citizenship &
Multicultural Affairs

Representative, Division of Aston

Wantirna South VIC 3152

Australia

Email: alan.tudge.mp@aph.gov.au

Our parish/community in Ferntree Gully welcomes the Governments' decision to review the current community support program for the refugees in 2020.

We recognize there are currently only a few pathways for refugees to find a safe home in Australia.

One of them is community-led resettlement through community sponsorship. Our community welcomes the commitment of your government to increase the number of places that are available. There are however some significant issues with the current program.

To fully harness community generosity that can help refugees, Australia's private sponsorship program needs to be designed in a way that encourages, not hinders, more people to take part, and that unlocks the welcome that exists in the Australian community.

Private sponsorship of refugees needs to be affordable, sustainable and improved.

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 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 communities in charge of welcoming and integrating new refugees into their own communities.

Our new neighbours are asking for help. As a generous country we can and should do more.

On behalf of a number of community organizations who have brought this matter to our council's attention, as well as the broader community, I call on your government

I have come that you may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10)

to build a more generous and more accessible Refugee Community Support Program which:

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2. Provides appropriate support and services
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5. Creates more places for people in need of protection to integrate and settle in Australia

Yours sincerely,



Thomas Kuruvila

12/10/2020



St. Jude's Parish, Scoresby

49 GEORGE ST., SCORESBY VIC. 3179
Telephone: 9763 7302 Facsimile: 9753 3534
Email: stjudeparish@bigpond.com
ABN: 69 582 786 786

By email:

alan.tudge.mp@aph.gov.au

Subject: Support for Australia's Refugee Community Sponsorship Program

To the Minister for Citizenship & Multicultural Affairs – Alan Tudge

Our parish community in Ashton welcomes the Government's decision to review the current community support program for refugees in 2020.

We recognize that there are currently only a few pathways for refugees to find a safe home in Australia.

One of them is community-led resettlement through community sponsorship. Our community welcomes the commitment of your government to increase the number of places that are available. There are however some significant issues with the current program.

To fully harness community generosity that can help refugees, Australia's private sponsorship needs to be designed in a way that encourages, not hinders, more people to take part, and that unlocks the welcome that exists in the Australian community.

Private sponsorship of refugees needs to be affordable, sustainable and improved.

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 is in charge of welcoming and integrating new refugees into their own communities.

Our new neighbours are asking for our help. As a generous country we can and should do more.

On behalf of a number of community organizations who have brought this matter to our council's attention, as well as the broader community, I call on your Government to build a more generous and more accessible Refugee Community Support Program which:

1. Does not take places from others in need
2. Provides appropriate support and services
3. Is affordable and sustainable
4. Allows community, family and businesses to act as sponsors
5. Creates more places for people in need of protection to integrate and settle in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Reynolds
Parish Priest

ST LUKE'S PARISH

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12 October 2020

alan.tudge.mp@aph.gov.au

Subject: Support for Australia's Refugee Community Sponsorship Program

To the Minister of Citizenship & Multicultural Affairs – Alan Tudge,

Our parish/community in Ashton welcomes the Government's decision to review the current community support program for refugees in 2020.

We recognize there are currently only a few pathways for refugees to find a safe home in Australia.

One of them is community-led resettlement through community sponsorship. Our community welcomes the commitment of your government to increase the number of places that are available. There are however some significant issues with the current program.

To fully harness community generosity that can help refugees, Australia's private sponsorship program needs to be designed in a way that encourages, not hinders, more people to take part, and that unlocks the welcome that exists in the Australian community.

Private sponsorship of refugees needs to be affordable, suitable and improved.

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 is in charge of welcoming and integrating new refugees in their own communities.

Our new neighbours are asking for our help. As a generous country we can and should do more.

On behalf of a number of community organizations who have brought this matter to our council's attention, as well as the broader community, I call on your government to build a more generous and more accessible Refugees Community Support Program which:

1. Does not take places from others in need
2. Provide appropriate support and services
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4. Allows community, family and businesses to act as sponsors
5. Creates more places for people in need of protection to integrate and settle in Australia.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Amal'.

Fr Joseph Amal
Parish Priest

The Hon Alan Tudge
Minister of Immigration, Citizenship & Multicultural Affairs
Representative, Division of Aston
Wantirna South VIC 3152
Australia



Dear Honorable Alan Tudge,

The Refugee Sponsorship Program at Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) has been in operation since 1979. We are an organization of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary.

To date, we have received and resettled approximately 7000 refugees. Under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program with Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), we screen hundreds of cases annually. When credibility has been established, we send cases to the IRCC processing center in Ottawa for approval and forwarding to our Visa Offices overseas.

As a Canadian Sponsorship Agreement Holder, we are required to provide IRCC's Minimum Financial Support, approximately C\$35,000 for a family of five. Support is required for one year or until the family becomes self-supporting. Funds are typically raised by parishes in our Diocese and by a variety of outside donors. The sponsoring parish undertakes all resettlement activities with the goal of preparing the family to become self-sufficient by the end of one year. Friendship, goodwill, and support between refugees and volunteers often extend well beyond the initial year of sponsorship, in some cases for a lifetime. Parish resettlement activities are strongly supported by CCIS Resettlement and Employment Counsellors. Newcomers are matched with job opportunities that carry them forward to independent living.

Fr Arnold Heredia established a working relationship with CCIS in August 2017, when he visited Sponsorship Agreement Holders across Canada. Since then, he has recommended several families for sponsorship that we approved and forwarded to IRCC. We wish Fr Arnold every success in establishing a similar Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program in Australia. We would be delighted to support him in every way, after forty-one years of experience with sponsoring refugees.

Should you need further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely

Antoinette Godbout
Coordinator, CCIS Refugee Sponsorship Program

CALGARY CATHOLIC IMMIGRATION SOCIETY



Archdiocese of Vancouver
MINISTRIES AND OUTREACH OFFICE

JOHN PAUL II PASTORAL CENTRE

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2020 October 19

The Hon Alan Tudge
Minister of Immigration, Citizenship & Multicultural Affairs
Representative, Division of Aston
Wantirna South VIC 3152
Australia

Dear Honourable Alan Tudge

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver (RCAV) has been officially sponsoring refugees through the Canadian government's Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program since its inception in 1979.

To date we have settled approximately 6,000 cases comprising about 12,000 refugees who came into Canada as permanent residents. As Sponsorship Agreement Holder, RCAV has an agreement with the Canadian Government to screen every application received to ensure that the principal applicant qualifies under the UNHCR definition of a refugee, being a victim of persecution or war who has left their country of origin. Only after their credibility has been established do we forward the case for processing to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Under sponsorship regulations, RCAV is required to guarantee an average sum between C\$30,000 and C\$35,000 per family depending on size. This is the approximate amount entailed in settling a family for a year. The cost of settling a single person applicant is approximately C\$18,000. The diocese works with parishes who raise the amount by appealing to parishioners and a variety of other donors. The parishes concerned organize a committee to take care of the settlement needs of the sponsored family. They also receive guidance and practical support from government funded Service Provider Organizations (SPO) who offer English language courses and training for marketable job skills. These are matched with job opportunities from parishioners and the SPOs that carry them forward to independent living.

Fr Arnold Heredia established contact with us in August 2017, when he visited Canada. Since then he has sent us a couple of applications for asylum, which we have approved and sent for due processing. We wish him every success in establishing a similar Special Agreement Holders program in Australia.

Should you need any further information or clarifications, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely

Diane M. Chua
Refugee Program Coordinator, Ministries and Outreach Office
dchua@rcav.org



ORAT
Office for Refugees
Archdiocese of Toronto

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October 20, 2020

The Honourable Alan Tudge,
Minister of Immigration, Citizenship & Multicultural Affairs
Representative Division of Aston
Wantirna South 3152
Australia

Dear Honourable Alan Tudge,

Re: Canada's Private (Community Led) Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto's Office for Refugees Involvement

I am writing in support of your efforts to involve Australians in welcoming and settling refugees to Australia, which would compliment your government's current commitments and international humanitarian obligations. Fr. Arnold Heredia, who is deeply involved in the refugee ministry, established contact with the Archdiocese of Toronto's Office for Refugees in 2017, concerning the plight of persecuted religious minorities. He has been keen to learn about the Canadian model of refugee resettlement through private sponsorship agreement holders (SAHs), and has asked our office to share with you ways in which your government could spearhead efforts for a community-led resettlement of refugees, as an alternative pathway to the current model used in Australia.

In Canada, the Private (Community led) Sponsorship of Refugees program began in the 1970s with the Indo-Chinese crisis, following the crisis in Vietnam, resulting in the flight of hundreds of thousands of displaced South Vietnamese people to parts of Asia – Pacific region, and North America. Overwhelmed by the number of refugees and the limited resources of the Canadian Government to support these refugees, the Government turned to its citizens, including faith groups to become involved in the government's efforts to resettle refugees. Using their own resources, faith groups, and regular citizens sponsored refugees that were screened and approved by the Canadian government. Thousands of Canadians answered the call and opened their homes, hearts, and resources to the rescue of refugees. Since then, over 325,000 refugees have been successfully resettled to Canada through Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP).

Interested communities enter into an agreement (refugee sponsorship agreement) with the Canadian Government through the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The agreement allows the group the opportunity to select/name the refugees that they wish to sponsor to Canada. The applicant/refugee is screened by Immigration Canada (IRCC), who makes the determination if they meet the various requirements established by IRCC. If approved, travel is arranged for the refugee to come to Canada. The PSR program is in addition to the refugees identified for and sponsored by the Canadian government through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This principle of additionality helps to leverage community resources, time and talent of volunteers amongst sponsor organizations. This increases the Canada's capacity to resettle refugees, beyond what the government itself is able to afford.

In Canada, there are over 120 community and faith-based sponsor organizations involved in the work of helping the federal government to sponsor and resettle refugees across the country. These groups, mostly faith-based communities, leverage their resources of time, talent and finances to undertake the burden of sponsorship. They commit to journey with the refugees before their approval and again after their arrival for one year; offering friendship, financial assistance, housing and access to various settlement services provided for by the Canadian government through settlement agencies for newcomers.

As one of the faith-based sponsor organizations, the Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto has a proud history of welcoming refugees to our Archdiocese. Our office works through our parish (church) communities and mobilize volunteers and resources to sponsor the refugees to Canada.. Though relatively a modest office of 9 staff, the Archdiocese of Toronto's Office for Refugees (ORAT) has sponsored and resettled nearly 5,000 refugee families to Canada since its beginnings in 1978. We are the largest faith based private sponsors of refugees in Canada. We operate through mobilizing our clergy and members of our parish communities. Through our organization, Canadians citizens or permanent residents are able to sponsor their relatives who are in need of refugee resettlement. We also conduct overseas mission trips to identify refugees who are in need of refugee sponsorship. These are matched with parishes, who leverage volunteers and donated funds to assist with the settlement of the refugees.


Under the Special Agreement Holders programme with the Canadian Government, we screen every application to ensure that it meets IRCC's guidelines. Once that has been determined, we forward the case for processing to IRCC. The Archdiocese of Toronto is required to guarantee a sum of C\$ 18,300 per individual adult applicant or C\$ 31,800 per family of 4 (couple plus two children), under Canadian sponsorship regulations (See Appendix A - sponsorship cost table). This is the estimated amount entailed in caring for a refugee family for a year upon arrival to Canada. Settlement costs are based on family size. The monies are raised by the sponsoring parish and by other donors who wish to assist in the sponsorship of refugees. The refugees also receive guidance and practical support from government funded Settlement Agencies and Employment Counsellors. They are matched with job opportunities that carry them forward to independent living.

Research has demonstrated the strength of the PSR program. 55% of refugees sponsored by private sponsors are self-sufficient in their first year of sponsorship (i.e., they are employed and earning sufficient income to meet their needs), while 90% of refugees resettled through the Canadian government programs (referred by UNHCR) continue their reliance upon government social assistance (welfare services) well beyond their first year of settlement. The stronger integration outcome of the PSR program can be attributed to the strength of the support that is being provided to the newcomer, by the family member or the parish community that has sponsored them. It is this level of emotional, social, and practical generate such strong integration outcomes.

We wish you every success in establishing a similar program in Australia.

Should you need any further information or clarifications, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rudy Ovcjak', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Deacon Rudy Ovcjak
Director, Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT)



19 October 2020

To whom it may concern,

RE: Community Sponsorship Program (CSP) for refugees review

Plant industries provides \$456M gross domestic product (including forestry) to the NT economy. NT Farmers aims to increase Territory agricultural production to \$600M by 2025 and \$1B by 2030, to help Australia achieve its national industry target of \$100B. To reach this goal, a skilled and reliable workforce is essential to the future success of NT plant industries.

Due to the strong demand for Territory agricultural produce and the already tight labour market, industry is facing significant workforce supply issues. Various established commodities are increasing yields and emerging commodities are growing, as is the requirement for experienced and qualified personnel

- Forestry has the potential to treble in value over the next 5 to 10 years therefore may employ 500 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) in that timeframe
- Horticulture is estimated to create up to 1,500 FTE jobs.
- Cotton industry development in the NT will support the employment of up to 424 FTE

Our members require low to high skilled personnel, to perform jobs such as picking and packing produce to managing staff, harvest and equipment. Our experience with employing migrants includes sponsoring through the skilled visa programs and manual harvest roles (there are 22 new migrants currently working in the NT mango harvest).

It has been brought to our attention that the Australian Government is reviewing the Community Sponsorship Program (CSP) for refugees. With a feasible CSP, Australian communities and organisations will be able to engage with it. For the resulting people who are accepted into the Australian community, we can state that they would be considered for work by farmers in the Northern Territory.

It is well known, the effect that Coronavirus has had on the workforce within our industry. A portion of our future workforce will also be dependent on future international travel restrictions. If these people in need can be sponsored and supported by the Australian community, we see a potential to offset the reduction in workers we have experienced during 2020.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Burke', written over a white background.

Paul Burke
Chief Executive Officer