



# Refugee Council of Australia

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## **Australian Parliament must reject cruel Temporary Protection Visas**

The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) has written to Federal cross-bench parliamentarians, urging them to reject the Abbott Government's renewed push to force refugees on to Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs).

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison is seeking cross-bench Senate support to reintroduce Temporary TPVs for refugees who entered Australia without a prior visa, following the Parliament's rejection of the policy in December.

In a letter to cross-bench Senators and Palmer United Party leader Clive Palmer, RCOA chief executive officer Paul Power said Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) were a cruel policy response to people found by the Australian Government to be in need of refugee protection.

"Refugees on TPVs will be denied permanent residency, the right to apply for citizenship, access to family reunion or the right to return to Australia if they leave temporarily for any purpose.

"For refugees already traumatised by the circumstances which led to them leaving their country of origin, living on a TPV will bring years of uncertainty about their own future and years of worry about the safety of family members still living in dangerous and desperate conditions.

Mr Power said the Australian Government's claims that TPVs were a necessary part of its suite of deterrents against asylum seekers arriving by boat were false and misleading.

"As TPVs will be issued only to people already in Australia and all future arrivals will be sent to offshore processing centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea and told they will never be settled in Australia, the Government cannot claim TPVs as a possible deterrent for future arrivals.

"History has also shown that TPVs were not a deterrent to asylum seekers arriving by boat. When TPVs were last used between 1999 and 2008, there was a significant increase in arrivals, including a spike in the number of women and children boarding boats because of the family reunion restrictions placed on fathers and husbands on TPVs."

Mr Power said that of the 11,000 people granted TPVs under the Howard Government, more than 9,500 had been given permanent protection before it left office in 2007.

"The Howard Government had to face the reality that it is rare for conditions in refugees' countries of origin to improve quickly. The Abbott Government will face the same reality if TPVs are reintroduced.

"Temporary Protection Visas are needlessly punitive, counter-productive and ultimately against Australian's national interest. It makes no sense to treat people who are likely to become long-term residents of Australia in such a cruel and unfair manner."

For further details about Temporary Protection Visas, read RCOA's Policy Brief at [http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/1409\\_TPVs.pdf](http://refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/1409_TPVs.pdf)

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The Refugee Council of Australia represents  
non-government organisations and  
individuals working with and for refugees  
in Australia and around the world