

2018-2025

Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum



BACK YOUR
NEIGHBOUR

Our History

In 2018, the Federal Government cut financial assistance to people seeking asylum via the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) Program.

A Mayoral Roundtable of Victorian Councils came together to undertake combined advocacy to the Federal Government.

This led to the establishment of the Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum.



**Back Your Neighbour
Launch**

July 2018

40+ Member Councils nationally

EXECUTIVE

Blacktown City Council (NSW)
Brimbank City Council (VIC)
City of Casey (VIC)
City of Darebin (VIC)
City of Greater Dandenong (VIC)
City of Hobsons Bay (VIC)
City of Hume (VIC)
City of Kingston (VIC)
Merri-bek City Council (VIC)
Maribyrnong City Council (VIC)
Melbourne City Council (VIC)
Wyndham City Council (VIC)
Yarra City Council (VIC)

GENERAL

Ararat Rural City Council (VIC)
Banyule City Council (VIC)
Blue Mountains City Council (NSW)
City of Ballarat (VIC)
City of Greater Bendigo (VIC)
City of Whittlesea (VIC)
Inner West Council (NSW)
Melton City Council (VIC)
City of Monash (VIC)
Moonee Valley City Council (VIC)
Newcastle City Council (NSW)
Nillumbik Shire Council (VIC)
Orange City Council (NSW)
Randwick City Council (NSW)
Surf Coast Shire Council (VIC)

SUPPORTER

Albury City Council (NSW)
City of Canterbury Bankstown (NSW)
Cardinia Shire Council (VIC)
City of Greater Geelong (VIC)
Griffith City Council (NSW)
Lane Cove Council (NSW)
City of Launceston (TAS)
Macedon Ranges Shire Council (VIC)
Maroondah City Council (VIC)
North Sydney Council (NSW)
Northern Beaches Council (NSW)
City of Port Phillip (VIC)
Queenscliffe Borough Council (VIC)
City of Ryde (NSW)
City of Vincent (WA)
Wellington Shire Council (VIC)
City of Wagga Wagga (NSW)
City of Whitehorse (VIC)

70+ COUNCILLOR FRIENDS

BACK YOUR NEIGHBOUR

Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce
Supporting People Seeking Asylum

Stand up for our neighbours and
community who need certainty
and stability to rebuild their lives.
backyourneighbour.com.au



A5 Community postcard

Back Your Neighbour is a group of **over 40 local governments** and community supporters in Australia. We advocate for **kindness and a fair go** for our **neighbours seeking protection** in our communities.

We ask the Federal Government to:



1. Provide **a fair and clear path for refugees** with unresolved immigration status to get permanent protection.



2. Give people a **valid visa with work rights** so they can support themselves.



3. Make **health care, financial help and important services easier to access** so people can participate fully in society.

3 Advocacy Asks

Councils support people seeking asylum

Thousands of people seeking asylum in Victoria lack access to essential services due to restrictive visa conditions. Many are denied work rights and healthcare, leading to **poverty, homelessness, and mental health distress**.

SRSS Federal program is largely inaccessible; **funding cut by 93%** since 2015–16. Recipients dropped from 29,000 (2015) to **1,057 (2025)**.

Councils fund material aid, housing and emergency support:

- Greater Dandenong: \$328,333 (2018) and \$298,000 (2019–20) for aid agencies.
- Wyndham: 3,500 requests for housing/food relief in 2024–25; 58% from high humanitarian need countries.
- Brimbank: employs 2 full-time Community Connectors.
- Merri-bek: \$267,400 (2022–2025) for refugee support initiatives.

Programs include **Community Connectors, food banks, social inclusion, education, and employment** pathways.

Costs shifted to local councils: estimated **\$35–\$53 million annually (2019)**.

Councils are struggling financially due to rate capping and rising expenses, with limited income sources. **Funding for councils isn't guaranteed**.

If Council support for these individuals and families ceases, the humanitarian crisis created by the Federal Government will exacerbate.

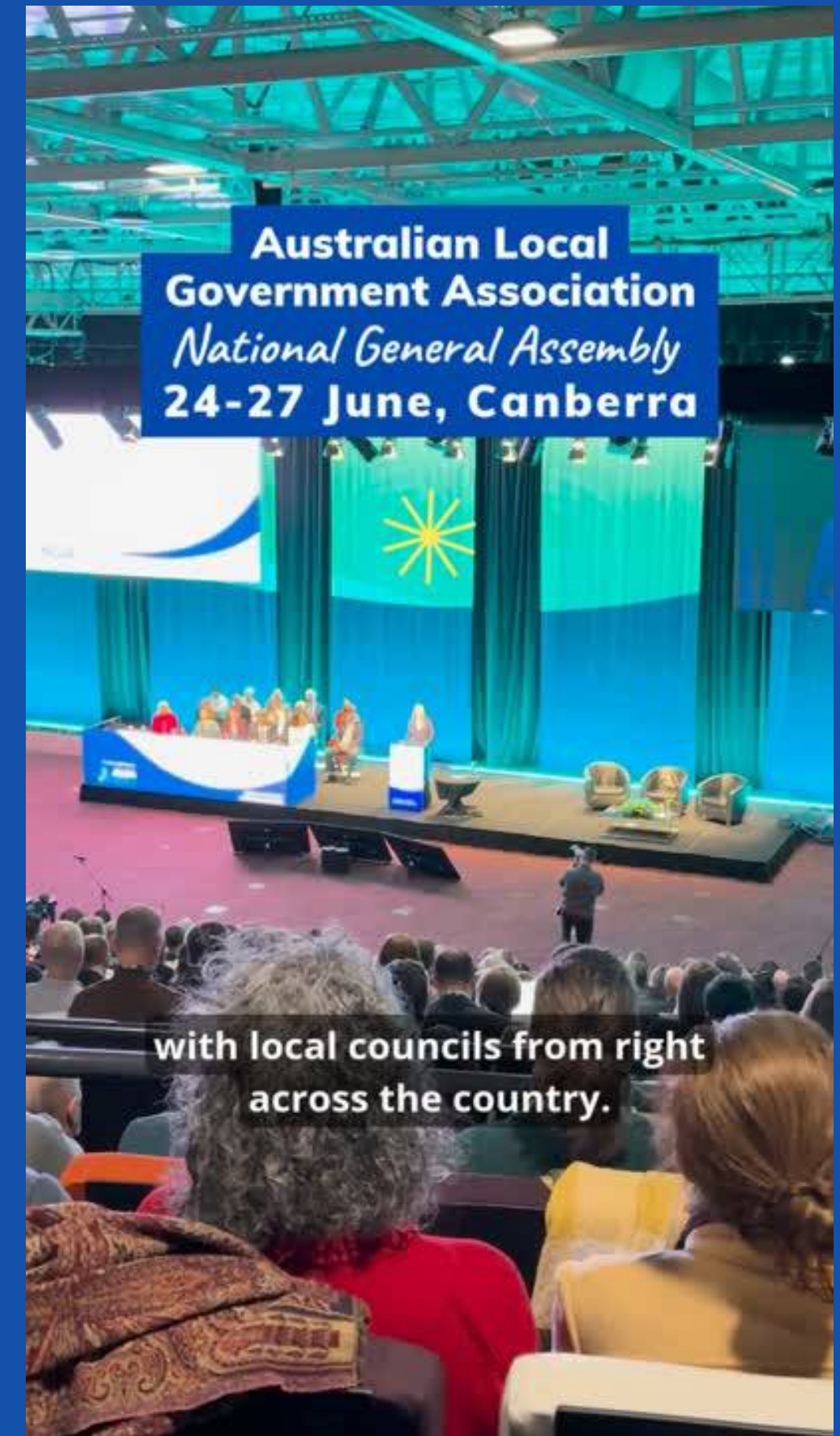


Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly

National Convention
Centre

24-27 JUNE 2025

BACK YOUR NEIGHBOUR
EXHIBITION STAND
MORNING TEA



Advocacy in Canberra

Taskforce delivered a pre-Federal Election 2025 campaign engaging with candidates and attended party policy launch.

Post-election, Taskforce delegates attended meetings in September in Canberra and continued with online sessions in October.

Focused on advocacy with Ministers, MPs, and their advisors from across the political spectrum. Joined by two lived experience community delegates.

Parliament House

2-3 SEPTEMBER 2025



Meetings in Sydney

4-5 SEPTEMBER 2025



**Blacktown, Bayside,
Strathfield, Randwick
and Lane Cove Councils**



Lord Mayor of Sydney



Lord Mayor of Adelaide

Local Government New South Wales Annual Conference

Penrith, NSW

23-25 NOVEMBER
BACK YOUR NEIGHBOUR
EXHIBITION STAND



1000+ DELEGATES, 124 COUNCILS, 30 NEW COUNCILLOR FRIENDS



for the National General Assembly and Mayoral delegation.

Pledge your support using our posters



Taskforce signs joint letter to Prime Minister Albanese

The Taskforce has joined with the Refugee Council of Australia and 39 refugee, human rights and faith-based organisations across Australia to congratulate the Prime Minister on his Government's re-election and to express our commitment in working towards an Australia that is fairer, kinder and more welcoming to all.

Read the letter here

Member and Supporter News



Griffith City Council joins the Taskforce

We welcomed Griffith City Council joining the Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting



I held a media conference to highlight to other MPS, the challenges Tibetan refugees continue to face.

And I met with representatives of the Back your Neighbour campaign - Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum.



Susan Templeman MP is at Parliament House, Canberra.
September 6 at 7:00 AM · Canberra, ACT ·

THIS WEEK'S PARLIAMENT WRAP-UP

→ 01 BACK YOUR NEIGHBOURS

I met with the Back Your Neighbours campaign to discuss rights for refugees - the meeting included Mayor Helen Davidson of Merri-Bek, and Olivia, a refugee who lives in Pascoe Vale.



→ 02 SOUTH KOREA - AUSTRALIA



I met with a delegation from South Korea, including Representatives Jeehye Park & Jiho Cha of Korea's National Assembly.

We discussed how the Australian Parliament functions and the importance of the Australia - Korea relationship.

→ 03 AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IMAM COUNCIL

On Tuesday, I joined other MPs to hear from imams from states and territories across Australia as part of the Australian Muslim Community Delegation to Canberra, led by Sheikh Shady Moustafa.



Peter Khalil

September 6 at 7:01 PM ·



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Print

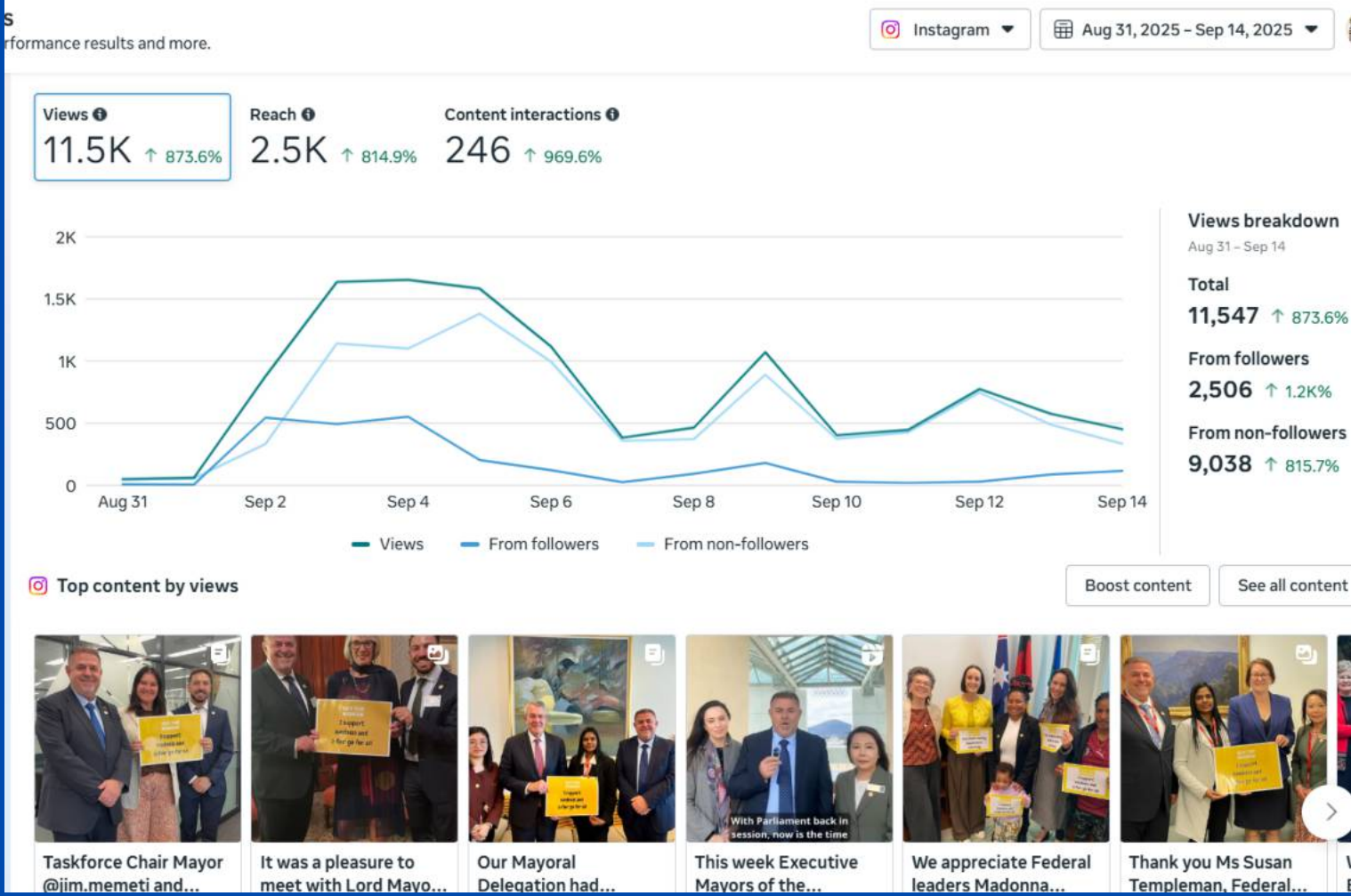
Posted on 7 Nov, 2025

Policy Focus: Migration – Balancing humanitarian & workforce needs



Media

Social Media E-newsletter



Mobilising Community



**WORLD REFUGEE
DAY**

DANDENONG, JUNE 2025



PALM SUNDAY

MELBOURNE, APRIL 2025



**REFUGEE
WEEK**

MERRI-BEK, JUNE 2025



world refugee day



palm sunday



community stalls



refugee week



national general assembly



big walk 4 refugees



80+ Partner Organisations

*No cost to
endorse as
supporter*



Afghan LEE Alliance Inc
Amnesty International – Bendigo Group
Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
National Council of Churches in Australia
Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association
Australian Refugee Action Network
Australian Services Union – VicTas Branch
Australian Tamil Sangam Inc
Bakhtar Community Organisation
Rural Australians for Refugees
Ballarat Refugee and Asylum Seekers Support Network (BRASSN)
Bayside Refugee Advocacy and Support Association (BRASA)

Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Casey Cardinia for Refugees
Centre for Migrant and Refugee Health
CommuniQ Queensland
Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic)
Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum
Domestic Violence Victoria
Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education
Enliven
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV)
Islamic Council of Victoria
See more at backyourneighbour.com.au/supporters

Calls to action

1)



*Help end the
uncertainty
for our neighbours
and friends*

<https://backyourneighbour.com.au/email-your-mp/>



- Invite local services to endorse
- Invite neighbour Councils to join
- Share a photo/video pledge
- Let others know that you are part of the Taskforce

2)



Follow the campaign on social media @backyourneighbour

3)



Subscribe to BYN e-news (360 recipients)