



Asylum seekers facing looming crisis

Drastic changes to asylum seeker benefits

The Federal Department of Home Affairs has dramatically changed the eligibility criteria for the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS), which is currently accessed by approximately 12,500 asylum seekers, most of whom live in the suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne. The result is that some 7,500 of them will lose their SRSS benefit, which, at \$250 per week, is already very hard for people to manage on. These people now face homelessness and destitution. They will also lose access to a caseworker and to torture and trauma counselling.

Who are these people?

They are mostly the "legacy caseload" asylum seekers who arrived in Australia in 2012-13. For approximately three years they were denied the right to work. They waited patiently, and jumped through all the hoops required of them by government. They were led to believe that their applications for protection would be resolved by June 2018, but it now seems that many of them will not know their fate until 2020. Most of them do now have the right to work, but finding a job when you only



have a temporary, short-term visa, and limited English skills, is no easy task.



Asylum seekers facing looming crisis

Drastic changes to asylum seeker benefits

The Federal Department of Home Affairs has dramatically changed the eligibility criteria for the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS), which is currently accessed by approximately 12,500 asylum seekers, most of whom live in the suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne. The result is that some 7,500 of them will lose their SRSS benefit, which, at \$250 per week, is already very hard for people to manage on. These people now face homelessness and destitution. They will also lose access to a caseworker and to torture and trauma counselling.

Who are these people?

They are mostly the "legacy caseload" asylum seekers who arrived in Australia in 2012-13. For approximately three years they were denied the right to work. They waited patiently, and jumped through all the hoops required of them by government. They were led to believe that their applications for protection would be resolved by June 2018, but it now seems that many of them will not know their fate until 2020. Most of them do now have the right to work, but finding a job when you only



have a temporary, short-term visa, and limited English skills, is no easy task.

What exactly is happening?

Many single asylum seekers have already lost these limited benefits, and if they cannot find work, they are dependent on the help of refugee support organisations, charities, and faith and community groups to survive. From 4th June, a much larger cohort, comprising families with children, will be given no more than four weeks to "transition off SRSS", meaning that they will lose all their current meagre benefits. They face homelessness and destitution in the weeks ahead. This is a cruel and inhumane policy change which is designed to punish asylum seekers, to break their spirits and to coerce them into returning to face danger in their countries of origin.

What can we do?

- We can campaign through our RAR groups to raise awareness in our local communities about this shameful policy.
- We can contact our local MPs to make them aware of the policy changes and seek their support in getting them overturned.
- We can urge opposition parties to raise the issue in parliament and to demand that they take a principled and humane stance in fighting for this policy to be overturned.

And let's not forget....

This harsh policy change is entirely within the discretion of the Minister, who once again demonstrates his complete lack of empathy and compassion towards asylum seekers and refugees.

What exactly is happening?

Many single asylum seekers have already lost these limited benefits, and if they cannot find work, they are dependent on the help of refugee support organisations, charities, and faith and community groups to survive. From 4th June, a much larger cohort, comprising families with children, will be given no more than four weeks to "transition off SRSS", meaning that they will lose all their current meagre benefits. They face homelessness and destitution in the weeks ahead. This is a cruel and inhumane policy change which is designed to punish asylum seekers, to break their spirits and to coerce them into returning to face danger in their countries of origin.

What can we do?

- We can campaign through our RAR groups to raise awareness in our local communities about this shameful policy.
- We can contact our local MPs to make them aware of the policy changes and seek their support in getting them overturned.
- We can urge opposition parties to raise the issue in parliament and to demand that they take a principled and humane stance in fighting for this policy to be overturned.

And let's not forget....

This harsh policy change is entirely within the discretion of the Minister, who once again demonstrates his complete lack of empathy and compassion towards asylum seekers and refugees.