

Joint Statement against changes to the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) for People Seeking Asylum

We the undersigned representatives of local governments in Victoria issue the following statement:

We want the Australian Government to provide adequate resources to meet the needs of people seeking asylum who live in the community.

Over 4,000 children nationally could be affected by the changes and we call upon the Australian Government to adhere to its national and international obligations in accordance with the Charter of Human Rights.

We strongly believe more effective collaboration and coordination is essential between Commonwealth, State and Local Governments and we seek the following commitments from the Australian Government:

Commitment One: We want the Australian Government to reverse the recent assessment changes to the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program and provide adequate income and case management support for people seeking asylum while they seek sustainable employment.

Commitment Two: We strongly call on the Australian Government to provide funding to enable accurate initial job readiness assessment by trained employment consultants who understand the unique and significant barriers that people seeking asylum face.

Commitment Three: We want the Australian Government to provide additional funding to enable asylum seekers to be registered as Stream B and C job seekers within the jobactive network of agencies to facilitate ongoing job readiness assessment and skilled employment consultant support.

Commitment Four: The Australian Government needs to improve local area coordination in cooperation with local government areas. We call on the Australian Government to work with local municipalities in exploring the feasibility of local coordination points to better respond to local area need.

Commitment Five: We strongly call on the Australian Government to provide greater resourcing to reinforce the capacity of community service and voluntary organisations to assist people seeking asylum to live safely in local communities and receive emergency relief and material aid support until such time as they receive a substantive visa or are deported.

Accountability

Additional resourcing will bring with it an obligation to ensure that Local Government allocates resources appropriately and resource areas of identified need.

We commit to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

We commit to evaluate the application of resources in people seeking asylum support programs by measuring service delivery against agreed objectives and targets. The evaluation process will include annual program reports and Inter-Governmental consultations to review program effectiveness and refine objectives and activities.