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Federal Election has shown Australians want just and humane treatment of people seeking asylum: CAPSA

The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA) welcomes the result of the Federal Election and looks forward to seeing the new Labor Government implement its promise to abolish Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs), and to provide pathways to permanent protection, as soon as practicable.

CAPSA, co-convened by Jesuit Social Services and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Australia, supports individuals, schools, parishes and Catholic organisations across education, health, refugee and social services in their advocacy for fair and humane treatment for people seeking asylum in Australia.

Co-Chairs of CAPSA Julie Edwards, CEO of Jesuit Social Services, and Tamara Domicelj, Country Director of Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Australia have consistently called for an end to the damaging, destructive and dehumanising treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum at the hands of successive Federal Governments.

“Australians have witnessed decades of inhumane, cruel and costly immigration policies inflicted on people seeking safety from persecution,” says Ms Edwards.

“With independents and minor parties winning a landslide number of seats, Australian voters sent a clear message on election day that they want refugees and people seeking asylum treated with more humanity, compassion and respect, in a way that upholds their dignity and basic human rights” she emphasises.

CAPSA notes that there is still work to be done towards this goal, with the new Labor Government still supporting Operation Sovereign Borders, offshore third-party state processing and mandatory immigration detention.

“This election result brings the prospect of an end to temporary protection, reunification for families who have endured years of enforced separation, an increase to Australia’s annual humanitarian intake, an end to the damaging ‘Fast Track’ visa process, a safety net for refugees, and constraints on indefinite and arbitrary immigration detention. We call upon the incoming Government to honour its commitments expeditiously, and offer our support to that end” says Ms Domicelj.

The abolition of TPVs and SHEVs will support the 19,000 people on temporary visas who have faced an uncertain future in Australia for almost a decade.

“This is a time of renewed hope for those who have lived their lives in limbo, with limited support and uncertain futures for almost ten years. However, this is also a time for continued, targeted advocacy and campaigning,” reflects Ms Domicelj.

Both Ms Domicelj and Ms Edwards reiterate that it will take ongoing, concerted effort from individuals, churches, communities and sectors to advocate that these changes to come to fruition and to hold the new Federal Government to account.

“We are cautiously optimistic about better futures for refugees and people seeking asylum – and will continue our advocacy in search of a more compassionate Australia,” says Ms Edwards.

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