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MEDIA RELEASE

PLAN TO END TEMPORARY PROTECTION POLICY WELCOME

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia welcomes the Albanese Government's delivery on its election commitment to provide a permanent visa pathway for existing Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) holders, who have been in uncertainty and disadvantage for many years.

People on these temporary visas have endured years of mental anguish caused by an uncertain future and limited access to social services, job opportunities and tertiary study.

'The Society welcomes the announcement by Immigration Minister, the Hon Andrew Giles MP, that this inhumane policy will end, and that these temporary visa holders will be able to access free refugee legal services to apply for a permanent Resolution of Status Visa,' National President Claire Victory said.

'This announcement offers hope to the more than 19,000 TPV and SHEV holders who have been contributing to Australian society for more than a decade, often in rural and regional areas.

We welcome the Government's commitment to completing the conversion process by early next year. However, we remain concerned for the people who have had their claims rejected by the unfair fast-track assessment process with the only avenue for further review being Ministerial intervention. Instead, the Government should end the fast-track assessment in line with Labor's 2021 Platform commitment.

No access to family reunion has also been a source of great trauma for temporary visa holders. So, it is good that those granted permanent protection will now be able to sponsor family members, particularly given the recent cancellation of Ministerial Direction 80.

. Sadly, barriers to the necessary levels of family reunion are still in place. Sponsorship of family members through Australia's Family Stream Visa program and Australia's Offshore Humanitarian Program is available to those granted a Resolution of Status Visa. However, both streams are competitive and complex and because of the limited number of visas available, only a minority are successful.

The Society congratulates the Australian Government for offering permanent protection to these people who've already lived in our community for so long, but we also call on the Government to fully implement its platform on refugees and people seeking asylum.