

24 January 2022

Australian Government's increased commitment to Afghan nationals a good start

The Law Council of Australia welcomes the announcement that the Australian Government will set aside at least 15,000 places for Afghan nationals through its Humanitarian and Family Visa Programs as a good start.

“The Law Council previously [called for](#) a substantial increase to the 3,000 humanitarian places the Australian Government initially set aside for Afghan nationals, in order to deal with the scale of the current crisis in Afghanistan adequately and proportionately,” Law Council of Australia President, Mr Tass Liveris said.

“The announcement by the Hon Alex Hawke, Minister of Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs of an additional 10,000 places for Afghan nationals in the Humanitarian Program over four years is a good start.”

“However, in light of the scale of the crisis – the Minister indicated in his statement on Friday that applications for the Humanitarian program have been made on behalf 145,000 individuals – this number will likely need to be revised upward going forward, and the Law Council is pleased that Minister Hawke has indicated the allocation will remain under review and could increase.”

“The Law Council applauds the Minister and the Australian Government for its legal services and settlement support packages previously announced for Afghans brought to Australia over the past six months.”

The Law Council also welcomes the publication by the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee on Friday of an interim report of its inquiry into Australia's engagement in Afghanistan.

The Law Council notes that [recommendations 6 and 7](#) of the interim report are consistent with the recommendations made in the Law Council's [submission](#) to that inquiry (see paragraphs 115-149), and it welcomes in particular the recommendation that the Australian Government review its policies for pathways to permanent protection visas for Afghan asylum seekers and refugees currently in Australia.

The Law Council will carefully review the interim report in coming days and looks forward to the Committee releasing the final report next month.