

May 2018

**[Insert local group name] supports community sponsorship for refugees**

Amnesty volunteers in {Insert your town XXXX} met with members of their local council this week in efforts to rally support for community sponsorship for refugees.

“Here in {insert your town XXXX} we know the great contribution, value and skills refugees bring to the community. Many local businesses, schools and community groups have spoken out in support of welcoming refugees through Community Sponsorship. We are calling on our representatives to do the same.” said local Amnesty volunteer {insert name}.

“We live in a world where people sometimes have no option but to flee their homes and countries – and rely on the kindness of strangers to help them start again. That’s why Amnesty International is pushing for all countries, especially the wealthiest, to do their fair share and welcome refugees.” said {insert name}.

Community sponsorship is a model where ordinary members of the community sponsor visas for refugees from around the world, who wish to begin the process of rebuilding their lives in Australia.

The community sponsorship model has worked successfully for almost 40 years in Canada, which has welcomed over 280,000 refugees through the program, in addition to its humanitarian intake.

In contrast, Australia’s community sponsorship program is capped at only 1,000 places this year, and each time one of these is allocated, a place is lost out of the 13,500 in the humanitarian program.

“We can see from Canada’s example how communities can lead the re-settlement of their new neighbours who have lost everything, and help them start again. We hope ordinary people across Australia will see the success of this and say ‘Let’s do our bit. Let’s call on the Government to expand and improve the existing community sponsorship program, so that we can bring our new neighbours home’,” said Shankar Kasynathan, Amnesty International’s refugee campaigner.

The local Amnesty action group has supported human rights for {insert no of months/years}.  The group meets every month at {insert location and time} and all community members are welcome to attend.