




Speech By
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ADJOURNMENT

Refugees

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (6.22 pm): This evening we are joined in the gallery by Salma and Abdullah Abid. Salma and Abdullah arrived from Afghanistan in August. I want to take the opportunity tonight to extend them our deepest welcome and to share some of the challenges facing the Afghan community in Queensland. I wanted to share some of Salma's words to start—

it's confusing and painful what the world is waiting for? Why not any action? From here, As an afghan refugee who I haven't received my permanent visa yet even, I request to the Australian government and world is, Move on!! Take an action, don't forget the Afghan people! a nation is drowning in a humanitarian crisis.

Today I am safe with my family and I think I can build a relatively good future for myself here, but I am worried, worried about a life I got imposed to left behind in Afghanistan, I am deeply worried about my people, especially, afghan women who are on the verge of a huge distraction.

Thank you, Salma.

My office has been working to help members of the Afghan community who are trying to help friends and family who are still home in Afghanistan and many who are here already but lack the security and certainty they deserve. There is an overwhelming need for the federal government to create at least 20,000 additional humanitarian visas for people coming from Afghanistan. Compared to the seventies and eighties when the Australian government welcomed tens of thousands of refugees, the political climate today is starkly different. We need more support for people on safe haven enterprise visas, temporary protection visas and bridging visas. They risk being overlooked in favour of recent evacuees. Given the complexity of immigration processes, they need help and support to complete humanitarian visa applications for extended family members.

The Refugee and Immigration Legal Service, RAILS, in my electorate recently received \$400,000 from the state government, but it is still drowning in work. The support services are stretched to capacity. Many organisations are refused referrals because they simply do not have the capacity. Mental health is also a serious issue, particularly for people on unstable visas who are extremely stressed about their own security and getting their families to safety. The Queensland government could be funding increased mental health support to help people processing trauma and dealing with sudden relocation.

As for all Queenslanders, access to housing, health and education services is crucial. Without accommodation, refugees can be stuck in hotels for months. Without full funding that covers 100 per cent of the cost of TAFE degrees, cost remains an insurmountable barrier for people to access education. We desperately need to take action on a federal level, but there is so much more that we could be doing here in Queensland to welcome these new arrivals to our community and give them the full opportunity to thrive.