



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Andrew Little	Portfolio	Immigration
Title of Cabinet paper	Extending the Refugee Family Support Category to Afghan evacuees	Date to be published	15 September 2023

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
July 2023	Extending the Refugee Family Support Category to Afghan evacuees	Office of the Minister of Immigration
19 July 2023	Extending the Refugee Family Support Category to Afghan evacuees DEV-23-MIN-0145 Minute	Cabinet Office

Information redacted

YES

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with MBIE's policy on Proactive Release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Some information has been withheld for the reason of free and frank opinions.



Cabinet Economic Development Committee

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Extending the Refugee Family Support Category to Afghan Evacuees

Portfolio **Immigration**

On 19 July 2023, the Cabinet Economic Development Committee:

- 1 **noted** that in response to the Taliban takeover in August 2021, Cabinet agreed to evacuate, and resettle in New Zealand, Afghan nationals and their immediate families who supported the New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Aid Programme and other New Zealand agencies in Afghanistan [CAB-21-MIN-0323];
- 2 **noted** that residence was offered to those evacuees eligible as outlined in paragraph 1;
- 3 **noted** that the Refugee Family Support Category (RFSC) supports successful resettlement of refugees and protected persons by providing them with an opportunity to sponsor family members who do not qualify for residence under any other category;
- 4 **noted** that those granted residence as per paragraph 1 have not been recognised as refugees in New Zealand and as residence class visa holders, are not legally able to make a claim for recognition as a refugee or protected person, meaning they are not eligible for the RFSC;
- 5 **noted** that Afghan evacuees are likely to share similar resettlement challenges to refugees;
- 6 **noted** that Cabinet previously agreed that eligibility for RFSC (on the same basis as refugees) be extended to the Afghan interpreters and their dependants, who were resettled in New Zealand [EGI-15-MIN-0146];
- 7 **agreed** that eligibility for the RFSC on the same basis as refugees be extended to those granted residence as per paragraph 1, including partners and dependent children;
- 8 **noted** that those evacuees with no or only dependent family members will be able to register for one opportunity to sponsor family members for residence in New Zealand straight away, while those with family members already in New Zealand will have to wait for Tier Two of the RFSC to reopen for registration which is not expected to be for a number of years based on current numbers;
- 9 **noted** that minors are excluded from the RFSC, and this exclusion will carry over to the proposed extension to Afghan evacuees;
- 10 **noted** that the approximately 16 unaccompanied minors that arrived in New Zealand as part of the Afghan evacuations will be managed on a case-by-case basis to consider whether parents or other family members should come to New Zealand;

11 **noted** that an evaluation of recent changes to the RFSC is currently underway and that the Minister of Immigration may report back to Cabinet if a further increase to annual places is required following that evaluation.

Sam Moffett
Committee Secretary

Present:

Hon Grant Robertson (Chair)
Hon Willie Jackson
Hon Damien O'Connor
Hon Andrew Little
Hon David Parker
Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan
Hon Kieran McAnulty
Hon Ginny Anderson
Hon Barbara Edmonds
Hon Rino Tirikatene
Hon Rachel Brooking

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Officials Committee for DEV