



# Edmund Rice Centre

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MEDIA RELEASE

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## Turnbull Government shirks humanitarian obligations with new Community Support Programme

The Turnbull Government is outsourcing its humanitarian obligations under the Community Support Programme funded in last night's Budget, according to the Edmund Rice Centre, a Sydney-based human rights advocacy organisation.

The Budget confirms the Turnbull Government will expand Australia's Humanitarian Programme to 16,250 places in 2017-18 and to 18,750 places in 2018-19. From 1 July 2017, the Government will allocate up to 1,000 places from the Humanitarian Programme to a new Community Support Programme, under which individuals, groups and businesses can sponsor humanitarian entrants to Australia.

"While the increase in Australia's refugee intake is an important first step, we are concerned about the way the Government plans to implement the Community Support Programme," the Centre's Coordinator of Campaigns and Development Dominic Ofner said.

"A private sponsorship programme should be seriously considered, but any such programme must be in addition to what the Government does, not in place of it."

"The Canadian Private Sponsorship Programme, which has been in place since 1979, has been endorsed by the UNHCR for its ability to **provide additional settlement spaces for refugees over and above those spaces provided by the Government.**"

"Unlike the Canadian model, the Community Support Programme announced on Tuesday will not deliver any additional places for refugees to be brought to safety and resettled in Australia."

"At a time when the world is facing the biggest humanitarian crisis since World War Two, this outcome is simply unacceptable."

"We are concerned the Turnbull Government is taking advantage of the compassion of the Australian people in order to shirk its humanitarian obligations and make Budget savings."

"The Turnbull Government can and should be doing more to bring refugees and people seeking asylum to safety, not finding ways to outsource its responsibilities."

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