



# A better, fairer way for reuniting families

Increasing family reunion places, reducing waiting times and cutting the cost to families

The Australian Greens will increase the intake of migrants under the family reunion visa streams by 10,000 per year, reduce the waitlist and cost to applicants and their family members and instigate a detailed review of the family reunion program.

Australia has a rich history of welcoming migrants to this country. The Australian Greens recognise the value migrants bring and their contribution to a strong economy and vibrant culture. The current system governing the ability for migrants to bring their family members to Australia is extremely expensive, slow and cumbersome with some visa categories imposing a 30 – 50 year waitlist.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a number of people on humanitarian visas (specifically those who originally arrived by boat) are prohibited from applying for family reunion visas all together. This has resulted in the cruel and arbitrary separation of family members.

## > A BETTER, FAIRER WAY

The Australian Greens will –

- Push for the increase of Australia's current intake of migrants under the family reunion visa categories by 10,000 people per year;
  - These will be taken from within the existing Migrant visa intake – 10,000 places will be redirected from the annual Skilled Migrant intake to the Family Stream in order to establish a migration system that is balanced and fair
  - This will clear the back-log and reduce the long waiting times
- Push for a decrease in fees and out of pocket expenses to applicants and their family members;
- Lift the bar on humanitarian visa holders who arrived by boat applying for family reunion visas; and

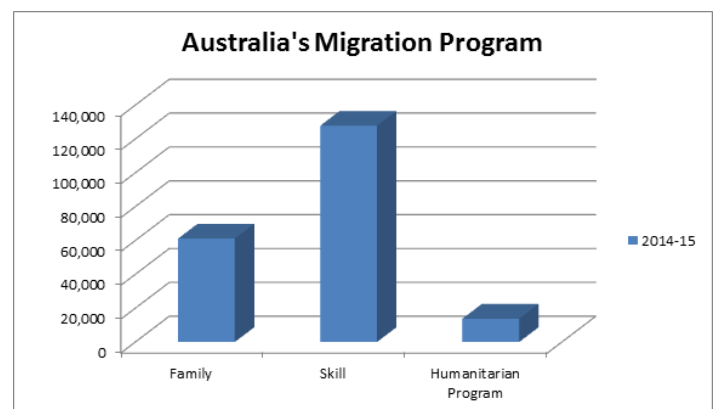
<sup>1</sup> According to the Department of Immigration, applicants for a Parent (non-contributory) visa can expect an approximate 30 year wait before visa grant: <https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Brin/Fami/Capping-and-queuing/Parent-visa-queue> and remaining relatives can expect to wait up to 50 years: <https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Brin/Fami/Capping-and-queuing/Other-family-visa-queue>

- Initiate a detailed Parliamentary Review of the family reunion program.

## > A MORE BALANCED APPROACH

Australia's migration intake under the Abbott and Turnbull government has become imbalanced. While we take a high number of skilled migrants in Australia each year, we take a relatively small number of people under the family reunion stream and an even smaller amount of refugees through the Humanitarian intake.

Australia took almost 190,000 people through the migration program last year – this includes almost 128,000 skilled migrant visas and around 61,000 family reunion visas.<sup>2</sup> Under the Australian Greens model, 10,000 of the existing skilled migrant visas would be redirected to the family stream.



The Australian Greens have the vision to restore the balance to Australia's migration program and the courage to make it happen.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014-15 Migration Programme Report - <http://www.border.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/statistics/2014-15-Migration-Programme-Report.pdf>