



Keeping the lights on for people seeking asylum

June 2019

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Mathew 25:34-40

Thousands of people seeking asylum who have fled war and persecution face a new challenge when living in Victoria: keeping the lights on.

People seeking asylum living in suburbs and towns across Victoria are struggling with cost of living pressures including increasingly unaffordable electricity and gas bills.

While other Victorians on low incomes are eligible for state concessions that subsidise their gas and electricity bills, people seeking asylum on Bridging Visa E, who survive on significantly less income, are not.



As of the start of March 2019 there are just over 7,000 people on Bridging Visa E living in Victoria.

The Victorian Government has demonstrated that it is willing to assist people seeking asylum that are living in Victoria.

The Victorian Government already assisted people seeking asylum in Victoria through Public Transport Victoria's decision to create the Asylum Seeker Concession Card to reduce transport costs for these people in 2013.

The Victorian Government has also allowed people seeking asylum access to a grants scheme, the Utilities Relief Grant Scheme, to pay for an electricity, gas or water bill that is overdue due to a temporary financial crisis.

Energy costs are just one of the challenges people seeking asylum face in the community. This small change would make a world of difference for them.

What You Can Do

Write polite letters to:

The Hon. Luke Donnellan

Minister for Child Protection
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers
Level 22, 50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000

Salutation: Dear Minister

The Hon Daniel Andrews

The Premier of Victoria
Level 1, 1 Treasury Place,
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Salutation: Dear Premier

Points to make in your letter:

- Express concern that people seeking asylum living in Victorian on Bridging Visa E are struggling to keep the lights on and keep their homes heated.
- Thank the Victorian Government for granting these people access to public transport concessions and access to the Utility Relief Grant Scheme.
- Request that the Victorian Government allow holders of an Asylum Seeker Concession Card to have access to electricity and gas concessions.