2 November 2026

Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Home Affairs
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you once again to raise concerns regarding the Bupa visa health checks that pose a significant barrier to resolving the visa status of our clients at the Asylum Seekers Centre (ASC). Last week, we launched a campaign, calling for an end to this safety tax and for the introduction of a fairer system, where people seeking asylum are not charged hundreds or even thousands of dollars before they are granted protection.

The reality is that these checks, which form the final step before a protection visa is granted, are simply too expensive for most people seeking asylum to afford. As you will know, many of the people we support are denied the right to work, while many are on low-incomes. Some are single parents, others are homeless or at risk of homelessness and vast numbers of our clients have waited years for their asylum applications to be processed by the government, without a proper safety net to support them in the interim.

Asking people seeking protection to pay hundreds or even thousands of dollars to Bupa in order to secure a protection visa is fundamentally unfair. It undermines the government's commitment to regularising the immigration status of people seeking asylum and facilitating the timely and equitable determination of asylum claims.

The current system of mandatory health checks keeps people trapped without a resolution of their status and is financially untenable for charity organisations like the ASC, which are increasingly forced to fill this gap.

They are people like Nadia*, who came to Australia after facing persecution in her home country. Nadia was living in a shelter with no external support apart from the Asylum Seekers Centre and faced losing her protection visa until the ASC covered her health check bill, which cost her over $600. While we were able to support Nadia, regularly paying these fees is not affordable in the long term for charities like ours.

Bupa should not make money from people seeking asylum in this way, and the government should work towards a system where these fees are waived for people who have fled to Australia from war and persecution.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter in more detail at a time of your convenience. Please let me know if this might be possible. Thank you for your attention to this matter and I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours faithfully,



Elijah Buol OAM
Chief Executive Officer
Asylum Seekers Centre