



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Casey Costello	Portfolio	Associate Immigration
Title of Cabinet paper	Establishing a permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) pathway	Date to be published	4 August 2026

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
April 2026	Establishing a permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) visa category	Office of the Associate Minister of Immigration
22 April 2026	Establishing a permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship visa category SOU-26-MIN-0037 Minute	Cabinet Office
June 2026	Establishing a Permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) pathway	Office of the Associate Minister of Immigration
June 2026	Appendix One: Key policy settings carried over from the Pilot	Office of the Associate Minister
17 June 2026	Establishing a Permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) Pathway ECO-26-MIN-0102 Minute	Cabinet Office
25 November 2025- 9 June 2026	Briefings regarding establishing a permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) pathway	MBIE

Information redacted

YES / NO (please select)

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 redacted for reasons of national security, international relations, privacy of natural persons, confidential advice to Government, free and frank opinions, and confidentiality and negotiations.



Cabinet Economic Policy 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.

Establishing a Permanent Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) Pathway

Portfolio Immigration

On 17 June 2026, the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee:

- 1 **noted** that in June 2016, Cabinet approved in principle the piloting of a Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) category, subject to a report back on the proposed details of the pilot, which were confirmed by Cabinet in August 2017 [CAB-16-MIN-0271, EGI-17-MIN-0224];
- 2 **noted** that, in Budget 2020, Cabinet agreed to extend the CORS category for a further three years to gather more information on the effectiveness of the programme and extended the category again in 2024 to allow decisions in the pipeline to be processed [CAB-20-MIN-0155.21, ECO-24-MIN-0120];
- 3 **noted** that the CORS pilot was a protection pathway that was additional and complementary to the Refugee Quota Programme (Quota), and that the pilot finished as planned on 30 June 2025;
- 4 **noted** that, under the CORS category, settlement costs and roles are shared between Government and community organisations;
- 5 **agreed** to establish the CORS category as a permanent visa category to support New Zealand's resettlement efforts by broadening access to resettlement, supporting local communities to welcome refugees, and delivering meaningful settlement outcomes, with an annual cap of 200 places plus or minus ten per cent from 2027/28;
- 6 **agreed** to retain the policy settings of the extended pilot in the permanent CORS pathway (with minor amendments in paragraphs 14, 15 and 16 below);
- 7 **agreed** to reduce the Quota by 200 places to 1,300 to fund a 200-place CORS programme;
- 8 **agreed** to an initial transition year target of 50 CORS places and 1,450 Quota places in 2026/27;
- 9 **authorised** the Minister of Immigration, if CORS visa approvals are not on track to meet agreed annual quotas, to use CORS places for Quota refugees;
- 10 **noted** that the above arrangements will maintain New Zealand's overall refugee intake of 1,500 humanitarian places per year and are fiscally neutral;

- 11 **agreed** that the Quota be reduced proportionately across the regional allocations to balance the impacts of the reduction, with no reduction to subcategory allocations;
- 12 **agreed** that Cabinet decisions on regional allocations and sub-categories in the next three-year Quota will next be required in 2028 for 2028/2029 to 2030/2031;
- 13 **noted** that, while establishing a permanent CORS category provides a broadened protection pathway for recognised refugees and their families, reducing the Quota impacts the individuals with the highest priority protection needs, and carries risk of negative stakeholder reaction that may overshadow some of the positive feedback of establishing a permanent CORS pathway;
- 14 **agreed** that the key policy settings being carried over from the extended pilot (with minor amendments) relate to cost and responsibility sharing between the Government and approved community organisations, the eligibility requirements of refugees (including age, English language and work experience) and the eligibility requirements (including financial resources and experience) and responsibilities of approved community organisations (as set out in Appendix One under ECO-26-SUB-0102);
- 15 **agreed** that a new international referral partner be engaged to undertake refugee identification and case verification, and conduct refugee status determination, which will enable New Zealand to provide an additional pathway to refugee recognition (without excluding refugees with UNHCR determinations);
- 16 **authorised** the Associate Minister of Immigration (Hon Casey Costello) to make further policy decisions as necessary, in line with the intent of the decisions above;
- 17 **noted** that the Minister of Immigration will certify amendments to Immigration Instructions as required to give effect to the decisions above, including any policy adjustments made under paragraph 16.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present:

Hon David Seymour
Hon Chris Bishop (Chair)
Hon Shane Jones
Hon Erica Stanford
Hon Nicole McKee
Hon Casey Costello
Hon Andrew Hoggard
Hon Mark Patterson
Hon James Meager
Hon Cameron Brewer

Officials present from:

Office of Hon Erica Stanford
Officials Committee for ECO