

## **Policy Statement on families holding a Temporary Visa or a Bridging Visa (Refugee Status)**

A **Temporary Protection Visa** is a visa for people who have entered Australia illegally. These families are given a Temporary Protection Visa while their refugee status is being determined. Students of families on a Temporary Protection Visa are enrolled in schools, fee exempt. These families are eligible to receive a Centrelink benefit (Special Benefit) and therefore are eligible to receive the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

A **Bridging Visa (Refugee Status)** is provided to families when their original visa is about to expire. Students of families on a Bridging Visa (Refugee Status) are enrolled in schools, fee exempt. These families are unable to access a Centrelink Benefit. However, these families can apply for the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) under the '*Special Consideration*' category provided they show evidence of their plight. A letter of support is needed from an appropriate welfare agency (i.e. the Australian Red Cross) to verify their situation.

## **Processing applications from parents/guardians who are holding a Bridging Visa (Refugee Status)**

Schools would need to key in the applicant's details into the EMA Web System as normal except that the status bar in the Application screen is changed to **P1 Special Consideration** (or **P2 Special Consideration** for the second instalment). The '**Save**' button should then be activated and a dialog box should appear. This dialog box is for internal use only, to key in the reason for the Special Consideration.

To alert Head Office that a Special Consideration has been applied for, the school would need to fax through to the Department's **Corporate Services Division** on **03 9637 2850** a letter endorsed by the principal, as well as the support letter from the welfare agency, to explain the special circumstances.