

Box Hill couple dreading the road to exile

17 Feb 10 @ 06:00am by Michael Howard



Edward Joseph's 92-year-old mother Irene will have to leave Australia with her son.

HIGH-POWERED pleas for compassion have failed to save Irene and Edward Joseph, with the latter forced to leave Australia in eight days.

Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne Denis Hart and Chisholm federal Labor MP Anna Burke have called on Immigration Minister Chris Evans to reconsider Mr Joseph's visa application, but the Minister is unwavering and has demanded his deportation.

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He must show immigration officials his plane ticket to war-torn Sri Lanka by Saturday, February 20 and is expected to fly-out on February 25.

His mother, a permanent resident of Australia, will fly with him despite grave fears for her health because he is her only carer. Mrs Joseph was first awarded a permanent Australian visa in 1979, but departed the country when her husband became ill.

She returned in 1996 with Edward, but because of an error didn't have her visa reinstated until December 2009.

Mr Joseph spent the intermittent years unsuccessfully fighting for bridging visas and a refugee visa, but was repeatedly refused.

A spokesman for the Immigration Minister Chris Evans said Mr Joseph had repeatedly been found to have "no lawful basis to remain in Australia" since he was first refused a visa in 1997, a finding he said was established by the Immigration Department, the previous Immigration Minister and the High Court.

But in a letter to the Minister Ms Burke supported claims by the Joseph camp that Irene's reinstatement as a permanent resident should enable Mr Joseph to be awarded a carers visa.

Ms Burke said this was "a significant change in circumstances".

"Failure to recognise these strong compassionate circumstances could result in irreparable harm and continuing hardship to an Australian permanent resident," Ms Burke wrote in a letter seen by the Leader.

It has also emerged that Finance Minister Lindsay Tanner campaigned for Mr Joseph when the Labor Party was in Opposition.

In a letter in May 2006 Mr Tanner called on then Immigration Minister Andrew Robb to show compassion to Mr Joseph's visa application, writing he and his Mum would otherwise face "an unsafe and uncertain future in Sri Lanka".

Mr Tanner's office failed to respond to the Leader's questions this week.

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<http://whitehorse-leader.wherelive.com.au/news/story/box-hill-couple-dreading-the-road-to-exile/#>