

## Backing for environmental refugees in NZ

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The National Council of Women is concerned the government is being advised against allowing environmental refugees into the country.

The council has made a submission on the Immigration Bill to include a policy on environmental refugees.

Spokeswoman Christine Low says New Zealand will soon have to consider if they will take in people from the Pacific island of Tuvalu which is expected to sink into the sea in less than 50 years.

She says it is the council's opinion that it's better to do something sooner rather than try to pass laws in crisis mode when there will be people trying to get into New Zealand as environmental refugees.

Low says they know of briefing papers to government advising not to grant refugee status to environmental refugees.

Meanwhile a new service for refugees aims to help them integrate into Auckland communities. Prime Minister Helen Clark officially opened the service at its Mt Roskill headquarters on Thursday afternoon.

The Regional Refugee Mobile Team will work with refugees after they have completed an orientation course in Mangere. It will include a psychologist, nurse, language teacher and a social worker.

Refugees As Survivors New Zealand chief executive Gary Poole says the refugees come from a number of countries devastated by war.

Source: [TVNZ.co.nz](http://TVNZ.co.nz)



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