

Allowances for persons on temporary visas in the Humanitarian Program

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Allowances for persons on temporary visas in the Humanitarian Program

Objective

Provide a cash allowance to holders of temporary Humanitarian Program visas.

The maximum payment of \$222 per adult and \$78 per child is reduced by a dollar for every dollar the visa holder possesses.

Description

This item provides for a one-off cash payment to cover the living expenses of holders of temporary Humanitarian Program visas after their release from detention or arrival in Australia until their first Centrelink income support payment.

Performance

A total of 100 holders of Temporary Humanitarian Program visas received a cash allowance in 2007–08, compared to 102 in 2006–07. Expenditure of \$20 324 was recorded.

Table 57: Allowances for people on temporary Humanitarian Program visas— performance information

Measures	Results
Quantity	
Estimated number of people who will be assisted	100
Quality	
All payments are made in accordance with eligibility criteria	Payments were made in accordance with the criteria

Secretariat for Inter-Governmental Consultations on asylum, refugee and migration policies—membership contribution

Objective

Support Australian policy objectives to promote managed migration, maintain an effective system of international protection, contribute to enhanced border security systems, and prevent illegal migration.

Description

During 2007–08, Australia contributed \$123 001 towards the administrative costs of the Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC).

The IGC is an informal, non-decision making forum for inter-governmental information exchange and policy debate on issues of relevance to the management of international migratory flows. It provides an opportunity for participating states to share best practice and to influence international standards and policies on a range of asylum, migration and refugee issues.

The IGC is currently comprised of 16 participating states in Western Europe, North America and Australasia. In addition to participating states, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the European Commission also contribute to the IGC.

Performance

The IGC continued to perform strongly by providing participating states with an informal framework for sharing information and developing perspectives on current migration and asylum issues which take into account the interests of individual participating states.

The IGC activities are informal, flexible and structured around three clusters of issues (admission, control and enforcement; asylum and refugees; and immigration and integration) and three cross-cutting activities (technology, data and country of origin information).

The IGC operates independently of the United Nations and is one of the few multilateral consultation mechanisms through which Australia can regularly and directly engage with many Western European states on domestic migration, border control and asylum issues.

The perspectives developed through participation in the IGC assist in informing the department's regional and bilateral engagements as well as other multilateral engagements.

During 2007–08, Sweden chaired the IGC and facilitated a successful discussion of its theme of 'Circular Migration'. The Swedish agenda covered key issues such as defining the policy objectives of circular migration and exploring the possible barriers and facilitators to circular migration. Participating states were also given the opportunity to discuss their own experiences with circular migration and their state specific perspectives on circular migration.

At the full round in Stockholm in May 2008, participating states discussed future trends and labour migration. Participating states also discussed national preparations for the October 2008 Global Forum on Migration and Development (a follow up event to the first meeting of the first global forum which was held in July 2007). The full round was well attended and attracted high level representation.

Australia continued to chair the IGC Technology Working Group. Specific topics explored by the working group in 2007–08 included:

- privacy issues related to the implementation of a range of biometric solutions
- the use of technology to assist enforcement authorities in tackling illegal employment
- the role of operational support centres in managing ‘back room’ functions associated with the deployment of biometrics
- identity management as an integrated system of business processes, technologies and policy; the challenges in ensuring interoperability of different solutions; and optimising opportunities for data sharing
- the experiences of member states in deploying mobile biometric technologies
- best practices for procurement and rollout of technologies for visa and border processing, with a particular focus on biometric solutions
- how ePassports can be used to support automated border processing systems.

Table 58: Contribution to the Secretariat for Inter-Governmental Consultations on asylum, refugee, and migration policies—performance information

Measures	Results
Quantity	
One payment is made annually	Achieved
Quality	
Australia's annual funding contribution is provided on time	Australia provided its annual funding contribution to the IGC in a timely manner and by the required date for payment

Initiatives to address the situation of displaced persons and promote sustainable returns

Objective

Fund the development and implementation of durable solutions for displaced persons (whether this be through voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement) and strengthen the protection afforded to displaced populations throughout the world.

Description

The program is administered by the department in consultation with the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). In 2007–08, Australia concentrated its efforts on developing and implementing durable solutions for people in protracted displacement situations, providing urgent humanitarian relief to stabilise populations displaced by conflict and strengthening the protection afforded to displaced populations internationally.

In 2007–08, the department funded projects in the Middle East (Iraq and Syria), South Asia (Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal) and Southeast Asia (Thailand and Indonesia).

Support was provided to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Austcare, an Australian non-government organisation with protection expertise overseas, as follows:

- \$553 000 to UNHCR to assist Iraqi women and girls in Syria who are or may become victims of sexual and gender-based violence
- \$217 000 to UNHCR for the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance and protection for displaced Iraqis in Iraq

- \$1 million to the IOM to assist in stabilising approximately 500 000 displaced people in Iraq
- \$630 000 to Austcare for the provision of protection officers in conflict-affected displacement situations in Asia, the Middle East and/or Africa
- \$917 000 to UNICEF for the protection of refugee children along the Thai-Burma border
- \$950 000 to UNHCR in Bangladesh to improve the living conditions of Rohingya refugees from Burma
- \$700 000 to UNHCR for protection and humanitarian assistance to Bhutanese refugees in Nepal
- \$1 483 000 to UNHCR for refugee registration activities to support the long-term development of comprehensive and durable solutions for Afghans in Pakistan
- \$702 000 to expand UNHCR's activities in Indonesia
- \$984 000 to the IOM for a central transportation hub to deliver humanitarian assistance and relief supplies to Sri Lankans displaced by conflict.

All amounts are rounded to the nearest \$1000.

Performance

Through its contributions, the government continued to promote durable solutions for displaced persons, create protection spaces for displaced populations and provide urgent humanitarian relief to people displaced by international emergencies. These activities assist in stabilising displaced populations, preventing vulnerable populations from being targeted

by people smugglers and trafficking, and preventing and deterring irregular migration, both within the region and to Australia.

Funding was provided to the IOM in Sri Lanka for a centralised transport service to assist over 50 internal agencies to deliver humanitarian and relief items to approximately 300 000 internally displaced persons.

Australia's support for UNHCR in Indonesia has strengthened protection capacity building in Indonesia, including allowing faster processing of refugee status

determinations through the deployment of additional UNHCR protection officers in field locations throughout Indonesia.

Australia's funding to UNHCR has assisted more than 124 000 Afghani returnees, by providing support for initial reintegration, mine awareness, polio and measles vaccinations for children, basic medical assistance, legal aid and transit centres for overnight stays.

Table 59: Initiatives to address the situation of displaced persons and promote sustainable returns—performance information

Measures	Results
Quantity	
Number of aid contributions	Australia's contributions totalled \$8.136 million in 2007–08 and were disbursed between 10 different projects
Quality	
Aid contributions paid in a timely manner and in accordance with government priorities	Australia's contributions were made throughout the financial year and supported the development and implementation of durable solutions for displaced populations as well as urgent humanitarian relief

International Organization for Migration— contribution

Objective

Support the achievement of Australian policy objectives in the area of promoting well managed migration, including managed humanitarian settlement and the reduction of irregular migration.

Description

In 2007–08, Australia contributed \$750 337 towards the administrative costs of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The IOM is an international organisation headquartered in Geneva which is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an inter-governmental body, the IOM acts with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration, advancing understanding of migration issues, encouraging social and economic development through migration, and upholding the human dignity and well being of migrants.

Performance

In 2007–08, the IOM attracted new member states and expanded its global operations, reflecting the increased international focus on the opportunities and challenges presented by migration. The IOM remains well positioned to provide expert policy advice and access to research to governments in the development of their migration policies. Australia utilises the IOM policy and governance dialogues to encourage the IOM and its members to seek practical solutions to migration issues, including in the Asia-Pacific region. Topics discussed as part of the IOM's policy dialogue during 2007–08 included the management of migration in the evolving global economy and the relationship between migration and the environment. Policy analysis and engagement on migration policy issues by the international community encourages greater international cooperation and better implementation of managed migration approaches by governments.

**Table 60: International Organization for Migration—contribution
—performance information**

Measures	Results
Quantity	
One payment is made annually	Australia's contribution to the administrative costs of IOM enables the department to participate in the governance of IOM and ensure that its work continues to reflect Australia's interests, in particular a state-driven approach to managing migration
Quality	
Australia's annual funding contribution is provided on time	Australia's contribution of \$750 337 was paid in full and on time



Profile

Department builds on stakeholder relationships

Active engagement with the community and stakeholders continues to be a high priority for the department. Key stakeholders provide important and valuable advice that can be incorporated into government policy.

'This has helped the department deliver world-class migration, refugee and settlement programs,' according to First Assistant Secretary Client Services and Network Performance Division, Jamie Fox.

A relationship of trust and confidence between the department and the community is essential for this exchange of information. Practitioner Information Forums are a feature of this relationship. The forums provide information on program policy, the opportunity to discuss issues associated with implementing these policies and access to senior departmental staff.

Forums were first held in July and August 2007 in a number of capital cities around Australia and the program has been expanded for 2008 with forums held in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide.

'Participants at the series of forums included migration agents, immigration lawyers and community representatives and service providers, with both staff and stakeholders finding the opportunity for discussion and networking invaluable,' Jamie said.

'The very positive feedback suggests that the department has correctly identified the need for a better dialogue between senior staff and a larger number of external stakeholders who work with the department's clients all the time,' he added.

The secretary, Andrew Metcalfe, described it as another great opportunity for everyone involved to see others' perspectives.

'This demonstrates the development of a robust relationship that helps each of us to do the best for our clients,' he said.

The Practitioner Information Forums are an ongoing feature as the department continues to work with its key stakeholders to achieve better outcomes and service excellence.

Joint Commonwealth–state research program for the payment to the Australian Population, Immigration and Multicultural Research Program

Objective

Provide information to assist with the formulation and assessment of policies by the Australian Government, state and territory ministers and departments.

Individual studies are designed to gather information not adequately covered by existing data and surveys.

In 2007–08, the Australian Government contributed \$50 000 to this program.

Description

The Australian Population, Immigration and Multicultural Research Program (APIMRP) was established jointly by the Australian Government and state and territory governments to undertake studies in the areas of migration, migration settlement, multicultural affairs and population trends.

Performance

In 2007–08 the APIMRP continued its work on *The People of Australia*, a series of publications based on data from the 2006 Census. These reports provide a comprehensive, statistical description of Australia’s diverse population down to the local government level.

Table 61: Joint Commonwealth–state research program for the payment to the Australian population, Immigration and Multicultural Research Program—performance information

Measures	Results
Quantity	
Number of payments made	The one payment required from the Commonwealth in 2007–08 was made on time
Quality	
Payments are made in accordance with agreed Commonwealth–state processes	This annual payment was made in accordance with agreed Commonwealth–state processes

Offshore management of asylum seekers

Objectives

- Facilitate the effective operation and management of offshore processing centres for asylum seekers in third countries
- Ensure that offshore processing centres in Nauru and Manus Province, Papua New Guinea (PNG), are closed in a timely manner with due consideration given to transferring residents, disposing of assets and negotiating conditions of closure with host governments and other stakeholders.

Description

The department monitored, supported and advised on offshore centre and related activities to allow people in offshore processing centres (OPCs) to be appropriately accommodated, cared for and given the opportunity for any asylum claims to be considered. The department moved quickly to implement the government's new policy to close the offshore processing centres in Nauru and Manus Province in PNG.

Performance

Following the Federal election in November the new government moved rapidly to end the 'Pacific Strategy' and close the OPCs in Nauru and Manus Province. The cases of the remaining 89 residents of the Nauru OPC were resolved quickly, with the last group of refugees departing Nauru

for resettlement in Australia on 8 February 2008. On 31 March 2008, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which operated the centres in Nauru and PNG, closed the OPCs, returned the sites and gifted their assets to the respective host governments. Closure of the centres formally ended the 'Pacific Strategy'. Prior to their departure, centre residents had access to appropriate accommodation, care and human services. The IOM provided high-quality and responsive services in its management of the processing centres, giving priority to the social wellbeing of residents. The IOM continually reviewed its community health programs, ensuring programs addressed changing needs. These included a wide range of sporting and leisure activities such as television, videos and reading materials and education programs including language classes and computer skills.

Prior to closing the centre in Nauru, the IOM reconfigured the site to better address Nauru's future needs. Fixed residential accommodation was converted to temporary classrooms for high school students while AusAID rebuilds Nauru's secondary school as part of the existing development assistance package. Office accommodation previously occupied by the department, the IOM and the Australian Federal Police was retained for use by the government of Nauru. Some demountable buildings were relocated for use as school buildings elsewhere on the island.

Table 62: Offshore management of asylum seekers—performance information

Measures	Results
Quality	
<p>The standard of care provided to Offshore Processing Centre (OPC) residents through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is high and is monitored consistently through assurance framework</p>	<p>The department monitored the performance of all contractors engaged in projects related to OPCs. The departmental liaison officer in Nauru and Canberra-based officers who travelled to Nauru, reviewed performance and ensured that the care and accommodation provided to residents of OPCs was appropriate and of a good standard. The IOM, which operated the centres, met its requirement of quarterly reporting against an agreed assurance framework.</p>

Payments to the Australian Red Cross Society for the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme

Objective

Provide financial assistance to eligible asylum seekers awaiting decisions on their Protection visa application.

Description

The Australian Red Cross has administered the Asylum Seeker Assistance (ASA) scheme under agreements with the Australian Government since 4 January 1993. The ASA scheme provides financial and other assistance to asylum seekers, determined by the Australian Red Cross to be without means of support and disposable assets. The ASA scheme provides assistance for basic food, shelter and health care. The rate of financial assistance is capped at 89 per cent of equivalent Special Benefit payments.

Eligibility for ASA includes both primary and review applicants in financial hardship who cannot meet their basic needs and who have no continuing and adequate support. Eligibility for ASA occurs where a decision is not made on a Protection visa application within six months or where the client meets exemption criteria which allow immediate access to ASA.

The criteria ensure that the elderly, minors, young families, the ill (including those suffering after torture or trauma) and those who care for these groups can be assisted without delay. Assistance at the review stage is also available where these clients meet these criteria.

The ASA scheme also provides assistance to asylum seekers who are ineligible for ongoing income support but who cannot afford to pay for their health examination. This ensures that there is no financial impediment to obtaining protection under the United Nations 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, as amended by the Refugees Protocol 1967.

Performance

In 2007–08, there were 1867 people assisted under the ASA scheme at a cost of \$4.79 million compared to 1780 people assisted at a cost of \$4.64 million in 2006–07. This equates to a 4.9 per cent increase in client numbers and a 3.2 per cent increase in costs compared to 2006–07. The increases were within expected parameters and included a one-off overhaul and update of IT support and links in the Red Cross.

Table 63: Payments to the Australian Red Cross for the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme—performance information

Measures	Results
Quantity	
1 000 people assisted (estimated)	1 867
Quality	
Payments are made by the Australian Red Cross Society to eligible asylum seekers in accordance with contractual obligations	Contract obligations met

Payments under section 33 of the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997

Description

Payments made under section 33 of the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* are special discretionary compensatory payments (acts of grace) made in circumstances where there is no other viable avenue of redress available and the Minister for Finance and Deregulation (or delegate) considers the payment is appropriate because of 'special circumstances'.

Performance

During 2007–08, the department received six requests for act of grace payments. Of these, one was approved.

Table 64: Payments under section 33 of the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997—performance information

Measures	Results
Quantity	
Not applicable	One payment made
Quality	
Payments are made in accordance with legislative requirements and guidelines as issued by the Minister for Finance and Administration	Payment made in accordance with legislative requirements and guidelines

Refugee, humanitarian and assisted movements— passage and associated costs

Objective

Assist the movement of applicants approved for entry to Australia under the refugee component of the offshore Humanitarian Program and a proportion of offshore entrants under the secondary movement provisions.

Description

In November 2007 the department entered into a new deed of reimbursement with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for the assisted passage of applicants approved for entry to Australia under the refugee component of the offshore Humanitarian Program. This deed replaced the previous contract which had been in place since 2004.

The assistance provided under this deed covers the full cost of medical examination and airfares for eligible entrants. These included the following visa subclasses:

- Refugee (subclass 200)
- In-country Special Humanitarian (subclass 201)
- Emergency Rescue (subclass 203)
- Woman at Risk (subclass 204)

- a proportion of Secondary Movement Offshore Entry (Temporary) (subclass 447) and Secondary Movement Relocation (Temporary) (subclass 451).

The IOM arranges medical screening services for applicants when requested by the department's overseas posts. The IOM is responsible for ticketing, pre-embarkation and coordination arrangements associated with the movement of assisted refugees. The IOM is reimbursed for all transportation and service costs incurred in the movement of these funded refugees to Australia.

Performance

In 2007–08, \$11.03 million was allocated under this program. There were 5786 refugee and humanitarian entrants assisted with travel and the overall expenditure on travel and associated services was \$12.97 million. The variation was due to changes in costs associated with the new deed and an additional \$2.333 million was spent in 2007–08 to cover the travel and medical costs associated with the resettlement of locally engaged staff of the Australian Defence Force in Iraq. There were approximately 12 800 medical examinations performed in 2007–08, including pre-departure medical checks for an estimated cost of \$2.52 million.

Table 65: Refugee, humanitarian and assisted movements—passage and associated costs—performance information

Measures	Results
Quantity	
6 000 refugees moved to Australia	5 786
12 000 refugee applicants medically screened for entry to Australia	12 800 ¹
Quality	
Payments for travel and medical processing are made in line with contractual obligations and scheme eligibility criteria	Yes

¹ This is an indicative figure. The department expects that when consolidated reports become available at the end of October 2008, the final number of screenings reported will be approximately 12 800.

Reintegration allowances

Objective

Facilitate the reintegration of those persons who wish to return to their country of origin.

Description

Reintegration allowance packages were introduced in 2002 and have been in place since to provide support to identified groups of people seeking to return to their country of origin.

Performance

In 2007–08, there were no applications for reintegration packages.

The Community Care Pilot being trialled in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane since 2007–08 now includes provisions to support people to return to their homeland voluntarily. This is part of a suite of case resolution strategies aimed at helping people to speedily resolve their immigration status in Australia, either through grant of a visa or through departure. More information about the Community Care Pilot can be found in Output 1.4 Compliance.

Management and care of irregular immigrants project in Indonesia

Objective

To improve the management and care of intercepted irregular migrants in Indonesia.

Description

During 2007–08, the department provided funding to the value of approximately \$6.862 million to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to deliver a two year project to improve the management and care of intercepted irregular migrants in Indonesia.

A funding agreement was established with the IOM as the delivery partner for this project. The IOM provides regular project reporting to the department.

The project aims to strengthen and enhance Indonesia's capacity to manage and care for irregular migrants intercepted in Indonesia by:

- refurbishing and expanding an existing Indonesian immigration facility at Tanjung Pinang (in Batam), and providing minor repair and rehabilitation work for an immigration facility in Jakarta
- developing guidelines and providing training for Indonesian officials, consistent with international standards
- providing training and support to the Indonesian Directorate-General of Immigration to establish a unit to facilitate the voluntary return of intercepted irregular migrants.

Performance

It is expected that the project will be finalised within budget and within the two year timeframe outlined in the funding agreement between the department and the IOM.

The performance outcomes against the key elements of the project are as follows.

Refurbishment of detention facilities

The design phase of the project, relating to the refurbishment of the Tanjung Pinang immigration detention facility and the repair and rehabilitation of the Jakarta immigration detention facility, was undertaken and completed between July and December 2007. An Indonesian design company was awarded the design contract and prepared plans for the work in close consultation with the IOM, Indonesian Immigration and the department. An Indonesian construction company was selected following a tender process and has commenced refurbishment work at Tanjung Pinang detention facility.

Development of immigration detention guidelines and training program

A needs analysis was conducted by the IOM at the immigration detention facilities to identify current procedures and practices in relation to the care and management of irregular migrants. This included collating and documenting all Indonesian legislation and regulations relating to Indonesian immigration detention arrangements, and conducting interviews with Indonesian immigration detention staff. Work on a standards and procedures manual has begun. The training program has not yet commenced.

Support to Indonesian Immigration to establish a returns unit

The IOM worked with Indonesian officials to enhance administrative frameworks for the processing of voluntary returns.

**Table 66: Management and care of irregular immigrants project in Indonesia—
performance information**

Measures	Results
Quality	
Australia's annual funding contribution is provided on time	Achieved
Quantity	
One payment is made annually	The department made a single payment in 2007–08 to cover the two year project

Safe Haven allowances

Objective

Provide financial support to people displaced by upheaval in their country and for whom the Australian Government has provided temporary Safe Haven in Australia.

Description

Safe Haven allowances are provided to those people on temporary Safe Haven visas who are not eligible for other income support benefits but are in need of some financial support.

Performance

In 2007–08, no people required Safe Haven allowances as those granted offshore Safe Haven visas to facilitate lawful entry to Australia were granted Temporary (Humanitarian Concern) (subclass 786) visas shortly after arrival, which made them eligible to access income support benefits.

Special appropriation—statutory self-regulation of migration agents

Objective

Ensure the satisfactory statutory self-regulation of the migration advice profession.

Description

The migration advice profession in Australia operates under statutory self-regulatory arrangements set out in part 3 of the *Migration Act 1958*. Under these provisions, the Migration Institute of Australia was appointed as the industry regulator, known as the Migration Agents Registration Authority.

The core functions of the authority are contained in section 316 of the Migration Act and include the registration of migration agents, handling complaints and applying sanctions against registered migration agents who have breached the migration agents code of conduct.

The number of registered migration agents increased by 298 agents from 3495 at 30 June 2007 to 3793 at 30 June 2008.

The amount of the special appropriation for this item is calculated according to the value of registration application fees collected by the authority. In 2007–08, it was estimated that the special appropriation would be \$5 million. The final appropriation was \$4.791 million.

Performance

A key activity during the year was the 2007–08 Review of Statutory Self-Regulation of the Migration Advice Profession. The review was undertaken to assist the government assess the effectiveness of the regulatory scheme, the state of the profession and its readiness for a move from statutory self-regulation to self-regulation.

In particular, the review examined:

- the legislative framework within which the Migration Institute of Australia acts as the Migration Agents Registration Authority
- consumer confidence and protection
- the capacity of the Migration Agents Registration Authority to deal with complaints.

The review was undertaken with the guidance of an external reference group. The reference group comprised four former and current migration agents. In September 2007, a discussion paper was released, and 37 submissions were subsequently received.

The review provided its final report to the minister by 30 June as required.