



Australian Government

Department of Immigration and
Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

Refugee and Humanitarian Issues

Australia's Response



© Commonwealth of Australia 2005

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the Commonwealth available from the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to the Commonwealth Copyright Administration, Intellectual Property Branch, Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, GPO Box 2154, Canberra ACT 2601 or at www.dcita.gov.au/cca

The statements and views expressed in the personal accounts in this booklet are those of the individuals named in the accounts and are not necessarily those of the Commonwealth, its employees, officers and agents.

Policies in relation to the Humanitarian Program change over time. For current information on visas visit the Department's website at www.immi.gov.au

Front cover pic: Refugees and Returnees in Africa's Great Lakes region © UNHCR/R.Chalasan
Back cover pic: Courtesy of the Newcastle Herald

Design and layout by The Couch Design Studio DIMMI3434
Printed by National Capital Printing



Australian Government

**Department of Immigration and
Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs**



Refugee and Humanitarian Issues

Australia's Response

June 2005

Foreword by the Minister



2

Australia has a long and proud record of helping refugees. Since the end of World War II we have accepted over 645,000 refugees and other people in need of humanitarian assistance into the Australian community.

People flee their home countries because their lives and security are at risk and their basic human rights are violated. Whether they are subject to individual harassment or targeted as members of an identifiable group, these people are compelled to leave familiar surroundings in search of safety and stability.

Today there are around 17 million refugees and people of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR leads and coordinates international efforts to address the plight of refugees and displaced people.

Australia contributes to these efforts in a number of ways but most significantly through its offshore Humanitarian Program, which goes beyond our international obligations and brings many thousands of people in need to Australia each year. Opening our homes and welcoming these new arrivals to our community is a measure of Australia's generous nature.

The Australian Government also provides substantial financial assistance, directly and through UNHCR, for refugee programs in many parts of the world. Through our participation in nation building, peace keeping and conflict resolution, we attempt to create a safer and more stable environment in refugee producing countries. In addition, we are actively engaged in international policy making to resolve refugee problems.

Our Humanitarian Program enjoys wide community support, reflecting the caring and compassionate nature of our people. We must recognise the commitment of volunteers who help humanitarian entrants to adjust to their new life, and the courage and perseverance of entrants themselves. Helping new arrivals to settle is a collective responsibility for all Australians—one the Australian community has embraced for many decades.

The June 2005 edition of *Refugee and Humanitarian Issues—Australia's Response* is an account of Australia's role in the system of international protection. It articulates the policies that guide our response to global refugee developments. As in previous years, the personal accounts of refugees included in this booklet provide a glimpse of their experiences and how our programs have benefited them.

I trust this booklet will inspire the reader and provide them with a greater understanding of Australia's efforts to alleviate the plight of refugees around the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Vanstone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone

Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

Table of Contents

3

Chapter One: Australia's role in the system of international protection

4

Chapter Two: Australia's Humanitarian Program

12

Chapter Three: Asylum: Meeting our obligations under the Refugees Convention—onshore component of the Humanitarian Program

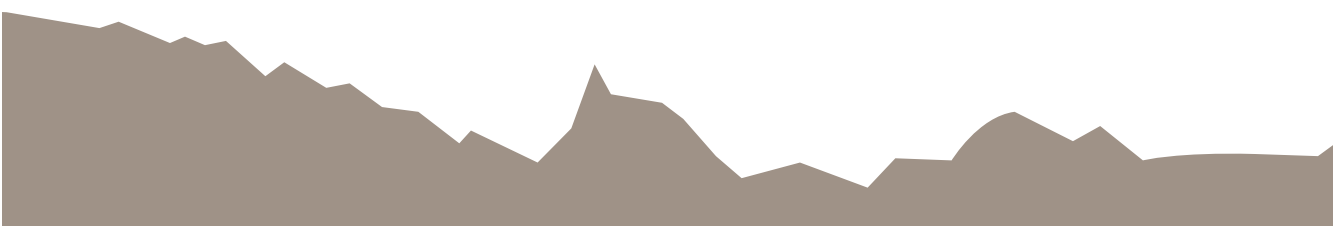
22

Chapter Four: Resettlement: The offshore component of the Humanitarian Program

30

Chapter Five: Settlement services for holders of Humanitarian Program visas: Adjusting to life in Australia

40



Chapter One: Australia's role in the system of international protection

The system of international protection

The system of international protection provides a means for countries to share the responsibility of protecting refugees worldwide and resolving refugee problems.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or UNHCR, is the organisation mandated by the United Nations to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. These activities are based on policies developed collectively by UNHCR and the international community. The United Nations 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees provides a foundation for this framework.

4

Chapter One: Australia's role in the system of international protection

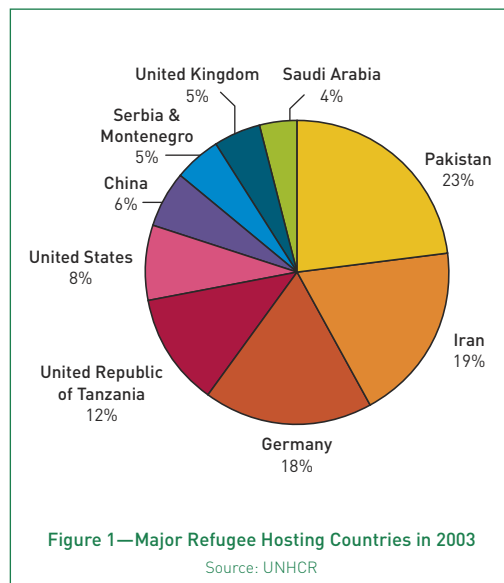
The **UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees** defines refugees as people who are outside their country of nationality and are unable or unwilling to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

The 1951 Convention applied only to refugee situations known at the time and was therefore limited to European countries. The **1967 Protocol** removed this limitation and extended the application of Convention provisions to refugee situations occurring after 1951 in any country.

Australia has been a long-standing signatory to both the Convention and Protocol. Australia was the sixth country to ratify the 1951 Convention and has been a member of UNHCR's Executive Committee since the 1950s.

The system of international protection has a number of elements. These are:

- **preventative measures:** Provision of aid, peace keeping, assistance in resolving conflicts, human rights training and rebuilding infrastructure helps reduce the occurrence of further humanitarian crises;
- **temporary protection in a country of first asylum:** If preventative measures fail, the continuation of humanitarian crises can cause people to leave their home country and seek asylum elsewhere, often by crossing borders to a neighbouring country. Immediate protection is required for these refugees until such time that a durable solution can be found;



- **durable solutions promoted by UNHCR:** These durable solutions provide for the longer term protection needs of people displaced by humanitarian crises:
 - voluntary repatriation in conditions of safety and dignity is the most desirable outcome for the individual, the society and the international community—support for reconstruction, reintegration and reconciliation helps ensure the success of repatriation as a durable solution;
 - local integration in the country of first asylum may be an option if repatriation is not possible. Helping countries of first asylum to increase their capacity to offer long term protection to refugees will enable a larger number of refugees to seek this durable solution. Often the countries of first asylum are in the same region as the refugee source country and therefore cultural ties can make the integration process easier;
 - resettlement in a third country may be considered if neither of the above two options is possible or suitable. Contrary to common belief, resettlement is least desired by the majority of refugees who are keen to return to family and friends, livelihood and familiar surroundings, language and culture as soon as they safely can. However, it is still the only available long-term solution for a significant number of refugees each year (around 100,000 per annum).

Around 3.5 million refugees have voluntarily repatriated to Afghanistan since 2002. Most returned from the neighbouring countries of first asylum, Pakistan and Iran, but others went home from countries as distant as Brazil, Malaysia, Cambodia and Australia.



Afghan girls return to school © UNHCR/N.Behring

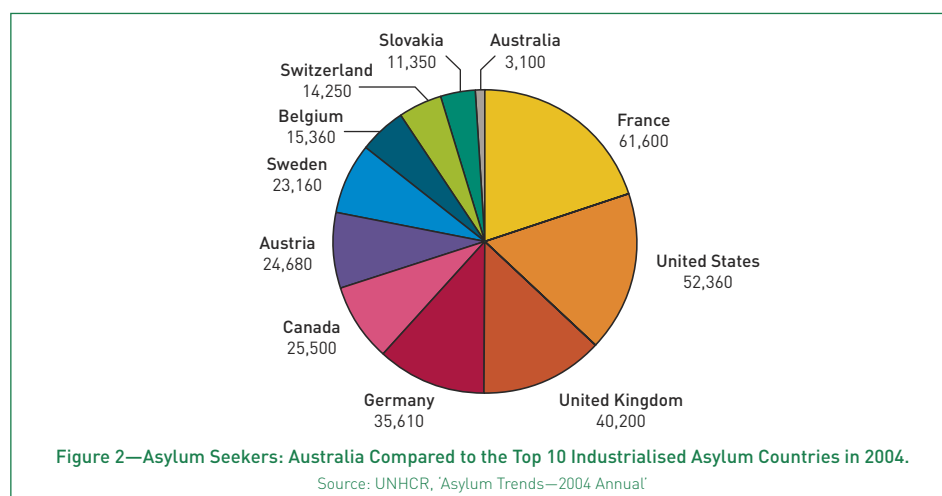
Australia's commitment to the international protection of refugees

Australia expresses its commitment to refugees and the system of international protection in a number of ways:

- **Overseas Aid:** Australia has committed \$2.133 billion to its Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget for 2004–05 including \$146 million provided to humanitarian, emergency and refugee programs for direct assistance. These programs will:
 - lessen the adverse impact of conflicts and natural disasters;
 - support the promotion of peace and security;
 - replenish multilateral development programs;
 - assist NGO and volunteer programs;
 - strengthen engagement with international agencies; and
 - improve conditions in refugee producing countries and countries of first asylum, thus facilitating voluntary repatriation and local integration.

In 2004–05 the focus will be on the Asia-Pacific region, in particular to identify new peace building and disaster preparedness strategies.

- **Contribution to international policy making:** Australia is an active member of UNHCR's Executive Committee. While encouraging other countries to implement UNHCR's Agenda for Protection¹, Australia has focused its efforts on eight priority objectives from the Agenda. These objectives aim to address concerns such as the root causes of refugee movements and people smuggling. Australia reports to the UNHCR Executive Committee on progress in the implementation of the Agenda.
- **Asylum:** Australia honours its obligations under the 1951 Refugees Convention and its 1967 Protocol by offering protection to asylum seekers² found to be refugees in its territory and by not returning them to countries where they face persecution. This is done through the onshore component of Australia's Humanitarian Program, which provides protection by granting protection visas to those found to be refugees in Australia (refer to chapter 3 for more details).



¹ The *Agenda for Protection* is an outcome of the *Global Consultations on International Protection* held in late 2000 to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of UNHCR. The Agenda sets out a Program of Action to further protection objectives during the years ahead.

² People who enter a country and seek that country's protection are known as asylum seekers.

- **Resettlement:** Australia's Humanitarian Program offers resettlement to refugees and others overseas who are in need of humanitarian resettlement and for whom other durable solutions cannot be found.

Resettlement places are scarce, with Australia being one of just 10 countries operating well-established successful resettlement programs for refugees who have no alternative durable solution. Our resettlement program is designed to assist people who are in greatest need of resettlement and is one of the largest programs of its kind in the world. Australia, with the United States and Canada, ranks amongst the top three resettlement countries in the world.

Australia's resettlement program goes beyond our international obligations and assists not only refugees but others with links to Australia who are subject to human rights abuses in their home countries (refer to chapter 4 for further details on Australia's resettlement program).

As an active contributor to the system of international protection Australia has consistently promoted the strategic use of resettlement to respond to long standing refugee situations. Australia supports UNHCR's group processing initiative, which involves the simultaneous referral and resettlement of a group of refugees who have experienced a common refugee situation. In 2004–05 Australia resettled groups of refugees under this initiative, comprising Liberian female heads of households and Burundian refugees from Tanzania.

Australia works closely with UNHCR to identify refugees most in need of resettlement. Australia undertakes individual assessments of refugees referred by UNHCR in order to maintain the integrity of the Humanitarian Program and to ensure all applicants meet health and character requirements.

| MAIN COUNTRIES OF RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES | |
|--|--------|
| UNITED STATES | 28,420 |
| AUSTRALIA | 11,860 |
| CANADA | 10,730 |
| NORWAY | 1,630 |
| SWEDEN | 940 |
| NEW ZEALAND | 650 |
| FINLAND | 560 |
| DENMARK | 510 |
| NETHERLANDS | 170 |
| IRELAND | 50 |

Figure 3—Main Countries of Resettlement of Refugees in 2003.

Source: UNHCR, 'Refugees by Number' (2004 Edition)

A DIMIA officer's narrative of the arrival of a group of Burundian refugees in Australia

The First Day

They had escaped persecution and on-going warfare in their home country Burundi, having given up their life possessions and turbulent pasts for the chance of a safer life. They had crossed barren African landscapes to seek refuge in the dry and dusty camps of Tanzania, amidst hundreds of thousands who told a similar story. They could not go back and they could not stay—they had become refugees.

As one of ten countries with planned resettlement programs, Australia agreed to lend them a helping hand. Their applications for humanitarian entry to Australia were successful and the refugees were ready to leave behind the insecurity and uncertainty of life in the camps. After final health checks and the provision of new clothes, their new life was about to begin.

After a two-day journey from Tanzania through transit points in three continents, they had finally reached their destination—Adelaide. The Burundians moved apprehensively across the tarmac and into the terminal. Their faces showed as much fatigue as anticipation and excitement, but the travellers appreciated the welcome cards handwritten by volunteers from the Migrant Resource Centre.

DIMIA's service providers spoke to the refugees in their native language. Their tone was enthusiastic and understanding—they too had once been resettled under Australia's Humanitarian Program.

The refugees collected their few belongings and eagerly followed their chaperones. The refugee children, not yet aware of the magnitude of their experience, played peacefully in the airport lounge and smiled for the cameras.

As they exited the airport terminal, the refugees faced a new world free from persecution. It would be a busy first few days in Australia, accompanied by the tireless workers of the Migrant Resource Centre. The Burundians would enter their new homes across Adelaide, they would register with



© DIMIA

Centrelink, enrol with Medicare and to further ensure their wellbeing, they would undergo another health check. Some would be introduced to counsellors specialising in torture and trauma treatment.

On the kerb of the arrivals terminal, the refugees boarded several mini-buses. The mothers and fathers warmly embraced their refugee children. Their new life in Adelaide had begun.



Photograph courtesy of Adelaide Advertiser

Current issues in international protection

Convention Plus initiative

UNHCR's Convention Plus initiative was launched in 2003 to address current issues in international protection of which three were recognised as priority challenges:

- **Resettlement:** Australia undertook a key role in the development of a Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement, a document welcomed by the Executive Committee in 2004.
- **Irregular movements of refugees and asylum seekers:** The irregular movement of refugees and asylum seekers was chosen as a priority because:
 - it destabilises structured international efforts to provide solutions to refugees;
 - it prevents the orderly prioritisation of durable solutions; and
 - refugees and asylum seekers often risk their lives when resorting to people smugglers to facilitate their irregular movement.

Australia is a keen participant in Convention Plus negotiations to develop strategies that effectively address this issue.

- **Targeting of development assistance:** More effective targeting of development assistance will support durable solutions for refugees, whether in countries of asylum or upon return home. Australia has been consulted about the development of a draft Statement of Good Practice that highlights the policies and practices needed to effectively target development assistance to those areas in greatest need.

Internally Displaced Persons

While there are a great many people who, as a result of persecution, war or disasters, flee across international borders in search of safety, there are even more people throughout the world who are forced to relocate within their own country. These Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), as they are known, can place great strain on often already stretched national infrastructure. Their numbers can exceed a country's ability to provide protection and support for its citizens.

Australia works with the international community and organisations such as UNHCR, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to help lessen the adverse impacts of conflict and natural disasters on vulnerable populations.

Protracted Refugee Situations

Temporary protection arrangements in countries of first asylum sometimes continue for many years resulting in large refugee populations for whom no durable solution has been found. UNHCR has identified 38 protracted refugee situations around the world comprising around 6 million people.

A number of major UNHCR initiatives involve developing effective responses to protracted refugee situations. Such initiatives aim to use resettlement in a strategic manner to achieve benefits beyond that provided to individual refugees. Australia, as an active member of the Working Group on Resettlement (WGR)³, supports the simultaneous use of resettlement in conjunction with voluntary repatriation (where possible) and local integration to prevent the development of protracted refugee situations.

³ The Working Group on Resettlement comprises UNHCR and resettlement countries and was established with the key objectives of sharing information on resettlement and addressing operational issues.



The importance of orderly resolution of refugee problems

Motives for the movement of people away from their home countries can be mixed. Some move purely for economic reasons, some move because they experience persecution or discrimination in their home countries, while others move to escape conflict or natural disasters. It is important that refugees are promptly identified amongst this mixed flow and provided with protection and timely access to durable solutions.

Some countries choose to only focus on people who seek asylum in their territory. Others choose to go beyond their international obligations and assist people through resettlement. Australia, as a long standing resettlement / migration country, places great importance on the delivery of orderly durable solutions, including resettlement.

Due to its geographic location Australia is seldom a country of first asylum. Some asylum seekers bypass protection in countries of first asylum and enter other countries like Australia in order to achieve a better migration outcome. Asylum seekers without authority to enter a destination country such as Australia may resort to people smugglers to facilitate their travel.

Unauthorised arrival⁴ is not only an impediment to the orderly resolution of refugee issues, it is also a process that leaves vulnerable people open to exploitation by people smugglers who offer to arrange hazardous and dangerous journeys for large sums of money. It undermines the right of nations to decide who may enter and remain in their territory and under what conditions. In Australia, the Government has put in place measures to ensure our protection obligations under the Refugees Convention are met but incentives for smuggled movement are decreased and the benefits of legal, orderly movement are understood.

⁴ Arriving in a country without permission to enter that country is commonly referred to as unauthorised arrival.

Australia's strategies against people smuggling and unauthorised arrival

Australia's strategy against unauthorised arrival is designed to address the range of conditions which lead to outflows of people in the first place and to secondary outflows of refugees from countries of first asylum. This strategy has three elements.

- **Prevention:** we aim to resolve refugee problems where they arise through our contribution to the system of international protection. As mentioned earlier, provision of aid, peacekeeping, assistance in resolving conflicts and rebuilding infrastructure help to improve conditions in refugee producing countries. If peace and stability can be restored, refugees may prefer to return to their home countries. Orderly resettlement is a solution only for those who need it and have no other solution available to them.
- **Combatting people smuggling:** this is achieved through countries sharing information, apprehending offenders, intercepting unauthorised arrivals, and other measures such as increased penalties for people smuggling activities. Intending unauthorised arrivals are detected by Australian Airport Liaison Officers stationed at key overseas airports.
 - In Indonesia the regional cooperation arrangements between Australia, Indonesia, UNHCR and IOM ensure that any protection needs of intercepted smuggled asylum seekers are addressed as soon as possible. These arrangements also ensure early access to durable solutions.

Australia has also made legislative changes to the Migration Act that have significantly increased the penalties for people smuggling offences and introduced mandatory minimum sentences. This has resulted in several persons receiving significant prison sentences for facilitating the travel to Australia of unlawful non-citizens; and

- **Reception arrangements:** these arrangements aim to provide protection to those who warrant it, whilst deterring people smugglers. They include the rapid assessment of unauthorised arrivals' claims for protection. Unauthorised arrivals found to be refugees are granted temporary protection, whereas refugees who entered with authority are granted permanent protection. Temporary protection offers a lesser package of entitlements than permanent protection (as discussed in chapter 3 under **temporary protection**).



Chapter Two: Australia's Humanitarian Program

12

Chapter Two: Australia's Humanitarian Program

Introduction to the Humanitarian Program

Australia's Humanitarian Program reflects our commitment to refugees and people in need of humanitarian assistance. It is separate from the Migration Program, which offers migration opportunities under skilled and family reunion streams.

Australia has a planned annual Humanitarian Program to ensure that it responds effectively to global refugee and humanitarian developments and that adequate support services are available in Australia to meet the specific needs of humanitarian entrants.

The Humanitarian Program has two components:

- the **onshore** (asylum or protection) component offers protection to people in Australia who meet the definition of refugee in the Refugees Convention.
- the **offshore** (resettlement) component offers resettlement as a means of protection and a durable solution for people overseas who are in need of humanitarian assistance and who have no other option available to them.

The offshore resettlement program has a Refugee category and a Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) category, which go beyond our international obligations and which Australia offers by choice. The SHP category also seeks to assist people who are not necessarily refugees within the strict legal definition but are in refugee-like situations and are subject to human rights abuses. Chapters 3 and 4 of this booklet provide further details on the onshore and offshore components of the Humanitarian Program.

Size and composition of the Humanitarian Program

The size and composition of Australia's Humanitarian Program are determined annually on the basis of:

- UNHCR's assessment of global resettlement needs;
- the views of individuals and organisations in Australia;
- Australia's capacity to assist entrants; and
- the number of refugees who are likely to require asylum in Australia.

The composition of the program is based on regional priorities (as discussed in Chapter 4 under resettlement) and the number of program places that can be allocated under the different visa categories. As the Commonwealth bears the full cost of processing, travel to Australia and the complete range of settlement services under the offshore Refugee category, program planning requires a specific allocation of program places for this category. The remaining places in the program are used for the SHP and onshore protection visa grants. As explained below under flexibility of the program, places can be moved from the SHP category to onshore protection visas depending on the demand for places onshore.

From 1996–97 to 2003–04, Australia had a total Humanitarian Program set at 12,000 new places each year. In 2004–05 the Humanitarian Program was increased to 13,000 new places, including 6,000 places set aside for the offshore Refugee category, an increase by 50% from the 4,000 places previously allocated to this category.

The consultation process for the formulation of the Humanitarian Program

Australia's Humanitarian Program follows the financial year 1 July to 30 June. The monitoring of actual and potential resettlement caseloads for the next program occurs throughout a program year. The Government undertakes a formal and extensive consultation process in the second half of the program year to determine the size and regional focus of the next program. This process includes:

- Inter-Governmental Consultations;
- seeking UNHCR's advice on global resettlement needs, priorities and recommendations;
- an advertisement in the newspapers inviting the Australian public to submit their views;
- an invitation from the Minister to State and Territory leaders and their opposition counterparts to provide submissions;
- a submission from the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) which incorporates the views of its 140 member bodies (this submission is funded by DIMIA);
- consultations with peak refugee and humanitarian bodies;
- consideration by the Government on the size and broad composition in the lead up to the Budget; and
- agreement of program priorities by the Immigration Minister, taking into account advice from the consultations.



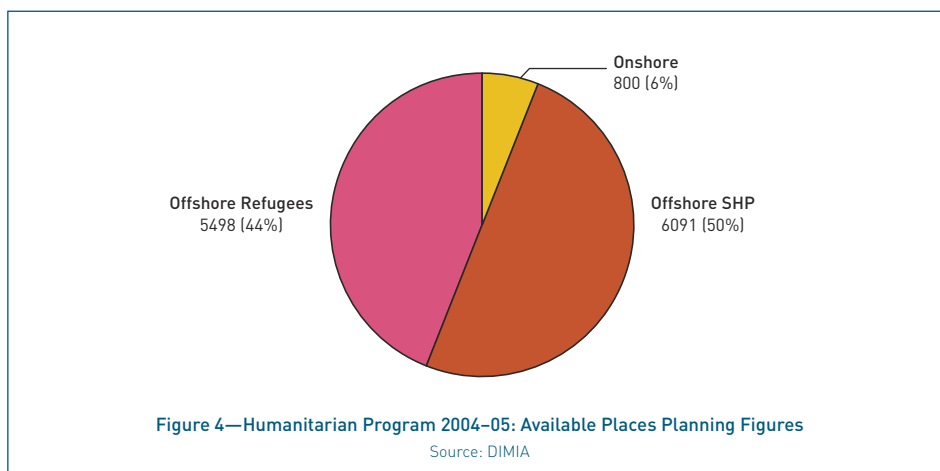
Flexibility of the program

The total number of places available in any year is affected by program management arrangements whereby:

- places can be moved between the onshore and the offshore components of the program according to need. Onshore protection visas have priority given Australia's protection obligations. Places needed for protection visas are normally taken from the available offshore SHP places;
- places not used by the end of the program year are added to the next year's allocation; and
- places are returned to the program from temporary protection visas where the person permanently departs Australia and where visas granted offshore are not used by the holder.

These arrangements help ensure that no places are lost and also give the Government the flexibility to respond quickly to emerging humanitarian crises or changing resettlement priorities. An important feature of the 2003-04 program was that at the end of this financial year there were no unused places to carry over to 2004-05 and places from 2004-05 were brought forward to 2003-04 to meet additional demands.

Due to Refugee and SHP places being brought forward from the 2004-05 program to the 2003-04 program, the actual number of places available for use in the 2004-05 program year is 12,389 places.



Costs associated with the Humanitarian Program

Costs associated with the Humanitarian Program are not limited to the processing and selecting of applicants but also include the provision of a comprehensive range of settlement services (please refer to chapter 5 for information on settlement services for humanitarian entrants) and general expenditure on government services to support entrants.

The Commonwealth Government is estimated to spend around \$2 billion over four years on refugees and other humanitarian entrants for a 13,000 place program. In the 2004–05 Budget, an extra \$29.5 million was allocated to fund the 50% increase in refugee places, to provide improved assistance to humanitarian entrants and for initiatives to support the SHP.



Iraqi refugees waiting to cross the border into Iran © UNHCR/J.Stierneklar

History of Australia's Humanitarian Program 1977–2004

Australia has accepted over 645,000 refugees and displaced persons since the end of World War II. Until 1977, Australia's approach to refugee resettlement was largely responding to specific international events as they arose.

It was the Indochinese refugee crisis of the mid and late 1970s with large flows of Indochinese seeking asylum in South East Asia and directly in Australia that prompted the then Government to introduce a clear refugee policy and administrative machinery in 1977.



Vietnamese refugees board plane to Australia, 1979 © DIMIA, National Archives of Australia A12111, 79/46A/21

The key components of this policy announced by the then Immigration Minister Michael MacKellar were:

- that the decision to accept refugees should always remain with the Australian Government while honouring our international obligations on refugee issues;
- to increasingly engage with the international community to resolve global refugee issues;
- to establish a regular and planned humanitarian program based on community consultation and Australia's capacity to assist. There was recognition that unlike other migrants, refugees require assistance because of their special needs;
- to establish enhanced administrative mechanisms to deal with refugee issues with the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (the Portfolio at the time) as the lead agency; and
- to establish an efficient and fair mechanism to determine onshore asylum claims.

These basic principles have remained among the key fundamentals of Australia's refugee policy for more than 25 years and have been flexible and robust enough to respond to evolving circumstances.

Until late 1981, almost all arrivals under the Humanitarian Program were refugees. A considerable number of people who were not refugees but who had family or community ties with Australia were still living outside their home country and were subject to human rights abuses in their home country. The Global Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) was introduced in late 1981 to assist such people.

In the late 1970s/early 1980s Australia was a participant with UNHCR and the international community to formulate strategies for dealing with the Indochinese refugee crisis.

The Indochinese situation dominated Australia's Humanitarian Program for close to a decade. However, by the mid 1980s the Humanitarian Program had become global with priority being given to applicants who had family or other close links with Australia. The program had diversified with up to forty nationalities represented, including significant East European, Latin/Central American and Middle Eastern caseloads.

By the late 1980s the SHP had steadily become the dominant category in the program. 1989 was a particularly significant year in the evolution of the Humanitarian Program and associated policy. In that year:

- Immigration decision making moved from a policy/discretion based system to a regulatory environment involving an application and a legal decision-making process;
- Australia played a key role in the development and operations of the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) for Indochinese remaining in camps in South East Asia. By the end of the CPA in 1996, Australia had resettled approximately 19,000 Indochinese under the CPA and 150,000 in total since 1975;
- The Woman at Risk and Emergency Rescue Visa subclasses were introduced and onshore humanitarian visa grants were included in the Humanitarian Program for the first time.

The aftermath of the Gulf War of 1991 resulted in a significant increase in the Middle East caseload. The 1990s also saw growing resettlement following from the war in former Yugoslavia. At the same time there was ongoing community support to assist other ethnic groups with close links to Australia whose lives were severely affected by conflicts in their countries, but who did not meet traditional humanitarian resettlement criteria. The Government's response was the introduction of the Special Assistance Category (SAC) in April 1991.

Overall, ten SACs were introduced. These were for the following groups: Soviet Minorities; East Timorese living in Portugal, Mozambique or Macau; citizens of former Yugoslavia; Burmese in Thailand; Burmese in Burma; Vietnamese; Cambodians; Sri Lankans and Sudanese. The major growth in the SAC program resulted from the SAC for citizens of former Yugoslavia. In 1995-96 these ten SACs delivered visas to 6,910 people.

In January 1993, the Government separated the Humanitarian Program from the Migration Program to provide a better balance between Australia's international humanitarian objectives and the domestic, social and economic goals guiding the annual Migration Program.

By 1995–96, more than half of the Humanitarian Program comprised either SAC or onshore grants. On coming to power in 1996 the Coalition Government sought to refocus the offshore program on assisting those most in need of resettlement. Following a review of the SAC program, all SACs were gradually brought to a close by 2001 and the SHP was increased.

During this period the size of the Humanitarian Program remained around 12,000 places annually, with 4,000 places reserved for Refugees. However, the high onshore component flowing from the increased number of unauthorised arrivals significantly reduced offshore resettlement opportunities. This was addressed in 1999 and 2001 by the introduction of a range of operational and legislative measures. These measures have been highly successful in reducing unauthorised arrivals, thus making more places available for the offshore component.

In recent years the focus of the Humanitarian Program has shifted to Africa.



A group of refugees arrive in Australia from Africa © IOM/P.Stephen

The fundamentals of the Humanitarian Program and associated policy that were established 25 years ago have generally served the Australian Government and community remarkably well, as well as assisting many thousands of refugees to rebuild their lives. Importantly, the Humanitarian Program has also been able to evolve over time to address changing domestic and international environments and to accommodate changes in Government objectives.

Waves of refugees to Australia

Since World War II Australia has responded to emerging humanitarian crises and changing resettlement needs by accepting large numbers of refugees from different parts of the world. For example, around 170,000 persons from Eastern Europe, who had been displaced as a result of World War II, arrived in Australia in the years following the war. Other situations that led to large numbers of refugee arrivals in Australia were the Hungarian uprising in 1956, the Prague Spring of 1968, Lebanese civil war in 1975, the Vietnamese conflict extending to the late 1970s and the Balkan crisis in 1991.

Since the mid 1990s, with escalating resettlement needs in the Africa region, there has been a significant increase in the resettlement of refugees from Africa. Over 8,000 Africans were granted visas in 2003/04 compared to less than 1,800 in 1999/2000. This has presented new challenges in providing appropriate settlement services to meet the specific needs of those communities and to ensure they settle well in the Australian community.

Given the fluidity of the global political environment, resettlement needs are likely to change again and our Humanitarian Program has the flexibility to respond to these emerging needs.

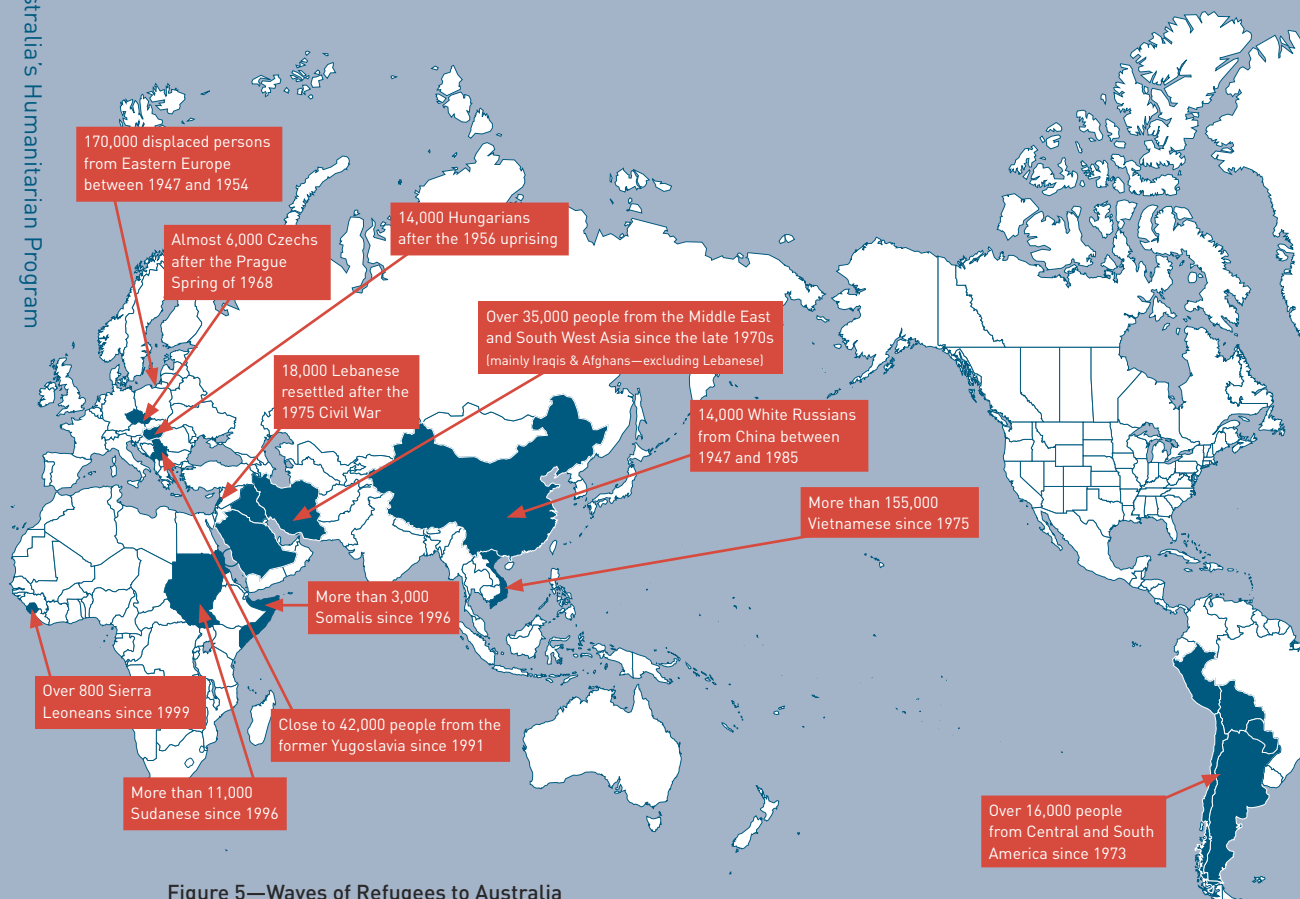


Figure 5—Waves of Refugees to Australia

Source: DIMIA

Girma Seid's story

Girma Seid and his 4 year old daughter Saron arrived in Darwin in August 1997 as Ethiopian refugees after spending 6 years in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya.

"I worked as an Ethiopian government administration officer for seven years but I fled the country during the civil war in 1991, leaving behind my father and other siblings.

Living in a refugee camp is very difficult and stressful, and all I wanted was to be out quickly. At Kakuma, I worked as a General Distribution Supervisor volunteer with CARE International liaising with different ethnic groups. I also worked as a UNHCR Interpreter and Protection Office clerk and was paid a monthly incentive of 3000 Kenyan Shillings (around AU\$70). The incentive money, though relatively small, meant I could provide additional items for my family.

The first six months in Australia posed a big challenge for me in 1997. Saron and I had to cope with a totally new environment and culture. I opted immediately to pursue further professional development. I took a computer studies course initially, and subsequently enrolled in Bachelor of Business at the Northern Territory University. The aim of a degree was not an easy task and I had to rely on friends' support and took casual work to cover the expense of child care. The first four years were very stressful. I had to cope not only with exams and assignments but also solely taking care of Saron.

After achieving a degree in Business in 2002, I was hired by Darwin High School as a Bi-lingual Officer, utilising my multicultural and academic knowledge. In 2005, I took the opportunity to join Melaleuca Refugee Centre as a settlement support officer. I find my current job rewarding, especially that I am a part of a team that handles and facilitates the settlement of newly arrived fellow African migrants. With my personal experience, I can understand totally what it is to be a newly arrived refugee in Australia. I am also continuing my study with the aim of a Masters Degree in Community Development from the Charles Darwin University. I like living in Darwin and find it a good environment for raising families.

I am grateful to the people and government of Australia for giving me and my daughter the opportunity to be part of this nation and am thankful for all the support we received in the past few years and appreciate all initiatives and the generosity of resettling an increasing number of African refugees."

Girma is active on various community activities. He worked voluntarily with the Community Support for Refugees group. He is a member of the African Association of the Northern Territory and represents the African community on the Police Ethnic Advisory Group (PEAG).



How Australia assists refugees onshore and offshore

20 How Australia assists refugees onshore and offshore

ONSHORE

Some people arrive in Australia and seek Australia's protection under the Refugees Convention.



© UNHCR/B. Betzelt

Humanitarian crises or individual persecution force people to flee their homes.

People who are granted **PPVs onshore or Refugee and Humanitarian visas offshore** have the same entitlements as other Australian permanent residents.

They will also receive certain special services to meet their immediate needs and help them settle effectively in Australia.

Following two years of residence in Australia they can apply for Australian citizenship. As Australian citizens they will have the right to vote.

TPV holders have the same entitlements as other temporary residents.

In addition, they are entitled to a range of special services to meet their needs consistent with temporary stay.

TPV holders are required to return to their home countries when their visas expire unless they are assessed as requiring further protection or are able to qualify for another visa.

Their claims for protection are assessed—those who are found to be refugees under the refugees Convention are granted protection visas:

- Permanent Protection Visas (PPVs) are granted to refugees who had permission to travel to and enter Australia.
- Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) are granted to refugees who did not have permission to enter Australia.



© DIMIA

OFFSHORE



© UNHCR/H. Caux

Most people seek immediate protection in a neighbouring country—they may find their way to a refugee camp. They wish to rebuild their lives and seek long-term solutions. Three long-term solutions can be considered.

1 Return to home country in conditions of safety.



© UNHCR/E. Kanelstein

2 Local integration in the country where they first sought asylum.



© UNHCR/L. Taylor

3 Those who cannot return to their home country or integrate safely in the country of first asylum can be considered for **resettlement in a third country**.

People seeking resettlement in Australia can apply for a Refugee and Humanitarian visa directly or through an office of the UNHCR.



© UNHCR/P. Benetar

Applications for resettlement in Australia are processed by immigration officers in DIMIA's overseas missions or in an offshore humanitarian processing centre in Australia. Successful applicants are normally granted permanent visas to resettle in Australia.

Chapter Three: Asylum: Meeting our obligations under the Refugees Convention—onshore component of the Humanitarian Program

Australia's fundamental obligation under the Refugees Convention is not to return a refugee to a country where they face persecution. The onshore (or asylum) component of the Humanitarian Program provides a means for asylum seekers in Australia to have their claims for protection assessed, irrespective of whether they entered Australia lawfully (ie. with a visa).

Not all people who arrive unlawfully in Australia are asylum seekers. Not all asylum seekers are refugees. Those found to be refugees and who satisfy health, character and national security requirements are granted a protection visa.

Consistent with its protection obligations under the Refugees Convention, the government is committed to providing protection to refugees whilst ensuring that Australia's asylum processes are not misused.

Applying for asylum

People in Australia who wish to seek asylum are required to lodge an application for a Protection (Class XA) visa. DIMIA's Fact Sheet 61, *Seeking Asylum in Australia* (available at www.immi.gov.au), provides information on how an application for a protection visa can be made.

Protection visas—subclasses

The onshore protection visa category has two visa subclasses and the application processes are the same for both. The two subclasses are:

- Permanent protection; and
- Temporary protection

Asylum seekers who have entered Australia lawfully on genuine documents, and who are found to be refugees and meet character requirements (are of good character) are able to access a permanent protection visa (PPV).

Asylum seekers who entered mainland Australia illegally (without a valid visa or on fraudulent documents) and who are found to be refugees and meet character requirements, are granted a temporary protection visa (TPV), which gives them residence for 3 years in the first instance.

Australia's obligation under the Refugees Convention is not to return a refugee to the country where they fear persecution. The Convention does not require the grant of permanent residence. The grant of a TPV, while consistent with our protection obligations, is part of measures introduced to discourage secondary movement of refugees and unauthorised arrival.

22

TPV holders, unlike PPV holders, have no automatic right of return if they leave Australia or right to family reunion and have access to welfare and settlement services consistent with temporary stay.

A TPV holder is entitled to:

- Work rights (including job matching through Centrelink)
- Special Benefit
- Rent Assistance
- Family Tax Benefit
- Maternity Allowance
- Medicare benefits
- Early Health Assessment
- Intervention Services which includes torture and trauma counselling.

They may apply for further protection at any time and will be assessed after 30 months of being granted the TPV. If found to need continuing protection, they may be granted a further temporary or permanent protection visa, depending on their circumstances.

Protection visa grants

With a decline in unauthorised arrivals, the demand for onshore protection has decreased leaving more places available for resettlement from offshore. The following chart shows the increase in protection visa grants in 2000–01 (as a result of a dramatic rise in unauthorised arrivals) and a subsequent decrease in protection visa grants over the last few years as a result of the decline in unauthorised arrivals.

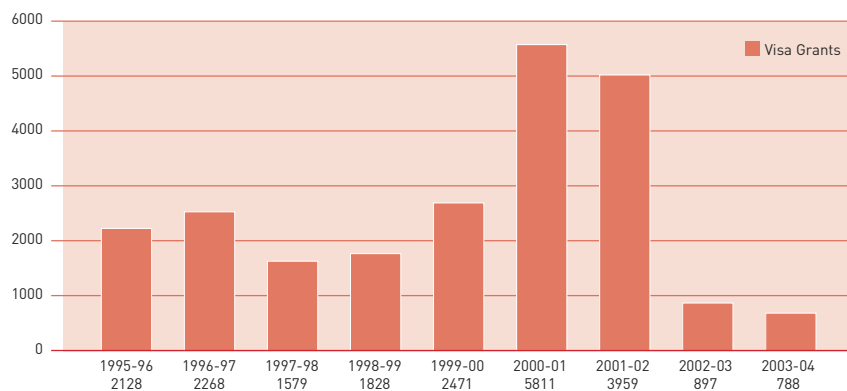


Figure 6—Initial Onshore Protection Visa Grants*

*Initial PV grant is a PV granted to a client who has not previously been granted a PV during their stay in Australia.

Source: ORS Report 411 of 30

New measures for TPV holders

On 27 August 2004, the Government introduced new measures for TPV holders. These changes acknowledge that:

- many TPV holders are making a significant contribution to the Australian community, particularly in regional areas;
- those who wish to return to their home countries voluntarily need assistance with rebuilding their lives in those countries; and
- TPV holders who do not qualify for further protection or for any other visa had been recognised in the past as refugees and they needed more time to prepare for return.

The new measures include:

- a provision for former and current TPV and other temporary humanitarian visa¹ (THV) holders in Australia at the time when the regulations commenced, to apply for a range of permanent and temporary non-humanitarian onshore visas. (Previously, TPV and THV holders were barred from making a valid application for any visa other than a further protection visa while they remained in Australia);
- access to a reintegration package for all current or former TPV and THV holders who are prepared to voluntarily return to their country; and
- the introduction of a 'return pending visa' to provide 18 months stay for former TPV and THV holders whose further protection visa applications are unsuccessful, to enable them to make orderly arrangements for departure. (Previously, TPV and THV holders found to no longer be owed protection had only 28 days to prepare for departure.)

Assessment of protection claims

The procedures for assessing protection claims enable Australia to meet its obligations under the Refugees Convention in a manner that is fair, just, efficient and timely. Every application for a protection visa is assessed on a case by case basis on the individual merits and is assigned to a DIMIA case manager who is trained in the law, policy and procedures concerning refugee protection visas and is assessed on a case by case basis on the individual merits.

Iraqi refugees at the Hafez camp, Bakhtaran Province © UNHCR/M.Elkhoury



¹ Other temporary humanitarian visas include Secondary Movement Visa subclasses 447 and 451 discussed in chapter 4.

Primary stage

The applicant's claims to protection are assessed against the Refugees Convention definition of a Refugee and Australia's domestic legislative requirements, taking into account relevant information about the conditions in the asylum seeker's home country.

The following sources of information are used by case managers in assessing applications:

- DIMIA's Country Information Service gathers reliable information from sources such as the international media, academics, international agencies, human rights groups, Australian overseas missions and foreign governments, specifically for the assessment of claims to protection. Much of this information is publicly available.
- Refugee law, procedural guidelines and legal and policy advice are also available to case managers to assist them in the assessment and processing of applications.
- If further information from the applicant is needed to reach a decision, the case manager may ask the applicant to attend an interview, assisted by an interpreter if necessary, or provide the information in writing.

Public interest criteria

Like other visa applicants, applicants for protection visas must satisfy public interest criteria intended to safeguard the interests of Australians. In the case of protection visa applicants, these criteria also take into account obligations under the Refugees Convention.

- **Health requirement**

To satisfy the health requirement, protection visa applicants are required to undergo a medical examination and chest x-ray. The purpose of this is to allow health authorities to identify any conditions posing a potential threat to public health and ensure that affected individuals receive treatment.

- **Character and related requirements**

While the Refugees Convention prohibits signatory countries from returning refugees to a country where they face persecution, it allows an exception to the Refugees Convention in the case of refugees regarded as a danger to the security of Australia, or who have been convicted of a particularly serious crime and who are a danger to the community (Article 33(2) of the Refugees Convention). This exception has been incorporated in the Migration Act 1958 and it supplements the character and national security requirements in the Migration Regulations 1994.

Additionally, the provisions of the Refugees Convention do not apply when there are serious reasons for considering that a person has:

- committed a crime against peace, war crimes, or a crime against humanity;
- committed a non-serious political crime outside Australia prior to the person's admission to Australia as a refugee; and
- been guilty of acts that are contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations (Article 1F of the Refugees Convention).

These are called the 'Exclusion Clauses' of the Refugees Convention and persons to whom they apply are not owed protection under the Refugees Convention.

Processing Times

DIMIA aims to give primary stage initial protection visa applicants in the community a decision within 90 days unless there are factors preventing finalisation that are beyond DIMIA's control.

Review stage—merits review

Applicants refused a protection visa at the primary stage may, within 28 days of notification of the decision, apply to the appropriate tribunal for review of the merits of their case. This involves a complete and independent re-examination of their case.

The Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) is an independent body with the power to review decisions on protection visa applications that do not involve character matters. The RRT has the power to do one of the following:

- affirm the primary decision—this means that the RRT agrees with DIMIA's decision that the applicant does not require Australia's protection;
- remit the matter to DIMIA for reconsideration of the case with directions or recommendations—in this situation DIMIA is required to make a fresh assessment of the applicant's claims taking into consideration RRT's directions and recommendations; or
- substitute with a new decision—this occurs when the RRT disagrees with DIMIA's decision to refuse the applicant a protection visa and finds that the applicant requires protection.

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) has the power to review a decision to refuse the grant of a protection visa where the decision is based on character issues outlined in the Refugees Convention and Migration Act 1958 as discussed previously under character and related requirements.

Ministerial intervention on humanitarian grounds

The Minister for Immigration has a personal power to give a more favourable decision to an applicant if it is in the public interest to do so. This can only be done after review by a Tribunal. This allows the Minister to deal flexibly with cases where the applicant does not meet the legislative criteria for a protection visa grant, but where there are broader public interest reasons why a visa should be granted. One such example may be the consideration of claims that fall within Australia's obligations under other international human rights instruments to which Australia is a party.

Judicial review

Asylum seekers who are unsuccessful at the review stage may apply for judicial review of the decision on the ground of jurisdictional error within 28 days of notification of the tribunal's decision. Judicial review is not an examination of the merits of the person's case but rather whether any legal or procedural errors have occurred in the process.

Why some asylum seekers are in immigration detention

Australia's Migration Act 1958 requires that all unlawful non-citizens who are in mainland Australia must be detained and, unless they are granted a visa to remain in Australia, must be removed as soon as practicable. Non-citizens are unlawful in Australia if they:

- enter Australia without a valid visa;
- remain in Australia after their visa has expired; or
- their visa is cancelled due to a character issue or breach of visa conditions.

The Department is required by law to detain people because they are unlawful non-citizens, not because they are asylum seekers. Only about 25% of people in immigration detention at any one time are pursuing issues flowing from a claim for asylum and the vast majority of asylum seekers are not detained while their claims are processed. Asylum seekers in immigration detention are comprised of unauthorised arrivals, visa overstayers, those who have breached their visa conditions and whose visas have been cancelled.

Most asylum seekers enter Australia lawfully and apply for a protection visa before their visa expires. They are usually granted a bridging visa, which allows them to remain lawfully in the community while their application is processed. However, those asylum seekers who have no authority to remain in Australia are detained until they are granted a visa or they leave the country.

Asylum seekers in detention who apply for a protection visa receive priority processing of their application. For the 2003–04 program year, 88.4 per cent of protection visa applicants in detention received a primary decision within 42 days (where there were no circumstances outside DIMIA's control). No refugee who has satisfied all criteria for a protection visa, including public interest criteria, remains in detention. Applicants are released into the community as soon as a protection visa is granted.

Applicants in detention who receive a negative decision on their protection visa application are able to seek review of the decision by the RRT or AAT, request ministerial intervention or seek judicial review. These actions inevitably result in lengthening their time in detention.

On 23 March 2005, the Minister announced the new Removal Pending Bridging Visa (RPBV) which enables the release, pending removal, of persons in immigration detention who have no outstanding litigation in relation to a visa application and have been cooperating fully with efforts to remove them from Australia, but whose removal from Australia is not reasonably practicable at the current time. The new RPBV commenced on 11 May 2005. For more information on this visa please refer to Fact Sheet 85 (available at www.immi.gov.au).

Detention services and care are regulated by standards set by DIMIA in consultation with the Commonwealth Ombudsman and are subject to full parliamentary scrutiny and accountability. These standards place strong emphasis on the sensitive and appropriate treatment of the detention population which may include survivors of torture and trauma, family groups, children and elderly people, persons with a fear of authority, and persons who are seeking Australia's protection under the Refugee Convention. They are publicly available on the Internet at www.immi.gov.au.

Measures are taken to ensure that most women and children are in immigration detention for only a short period. Residential Housing Projects (RHPs) are preferred to immigration detention centres for women and children who are in immigration detention for longer periods of time. RHPs were developed as a more domestic and independent family environment for women and children in detention, providing them with housing or motel-style accommodation in a community setting.

The Australian Government is strongly committed to meeting the special needs of women and children in immigration detention and developing innovative alternative detention strategies for them. This is reflected in the 2004–05 Budget where \$27.4 million over 4 years has been set aside for new RHPs in Sydney and Perth and for other alternative detention arrangements, such as foster care arrangements with State welfare authorities and community care placements for people with special needs.

Help for asylum seekers

DIMIA provides assistance to asylum seekers who need help with lodging a protection visa application and making ends meet while their application is processed. Many church and community groups also lend their support to asylum seekers in a variety of ways.

Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS)

The Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS) is a DIMIA-administered service provided by registered migration agents to help asylum seekers in detention and disadvantaged visa applicants in the community to prepare, lodge and present visa applications at the primary and review stages.

Work rights

With the exception of people detained as unauthorised arrivals, protection visa applicants are granted a bridging visa, which allows them to remain lawfully in the community until their applications are finalised. A bridging visa may have work rights attached depending on individual circumstances, such as whether they applied for a protection visa when they had been in Australia for less than 45 days in the 12 months before the date of lodgement.

Asylum Seeker Assistance (ASA)

The ASA scheme provides financial assistance to eligible protection visa applicants who cannot meet their basic needs for food, accommodation, clothing and health care, including payment of early health assessments. The scheme is funded by DIMIA and is administered by the Australian Red Cross. The protection visa applications of ASA recipients are processed as a matter of priority.



Chapter Four: Resettlement: The offshore component of the Humanitarian Program

30

Chapter Four: Resettlement: The offshore component of the Humanitarian Program

Resettlement provides a lawful and orderly means by which people in need of protection and durable solutions can seek to come to Australia. Our resettlement program is one of the principal ways in which we contribute to the system of international protection. Australia resettles refugees and others who are overseas through the offshore component of the Humanitarian Program.

The offshore component of the Humanitarian Program (or the resettlement program) assists people who are subject to persecution or substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights in their home countries and have fled their mistreatment. The program is designed to ensure that places available go to those in greatest relative need of resettlement.

Seeking resettlement—Humanitarian visa categories and subclasses

The resettlement program has one class of visa known as the Refugee and Humanitarian visa (class XB) and within this class are permanent and temporary visa subclasses.

Permanent visas

There are five permanent subclasses of visas. Of these, four subclasses fall within the Refugee category and one within the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) category.

• **Refugee category**

The Refugee category assists people who are subject to persecution in their home country and have a strong need for resettlement. Persecution of individuals occurs because of oppressive regimes where government authorities are the perpetrators of persecution or because governments are unable or unwilling to protect their citizens in times of civil unrest and conflict.

Persecution may constitute targeted harassment such as arbitrary arrests and interrogation, detention, damage to property, physical abuse including assault and in extreme cases, torture.

Australia works closely with UNHCR in selecting people under the Refugee category. Most eligible applicants are referred by UNHCR to Australia for resettlement.

In 2004 the Government increased the number of refugee places by 50% to 6,000 places.

The visa subclasses within the Refugee category are:

- **Refugee**, for applicants who have fled persecution in their home country and are living outside their home country;
- **In-country Special Humanitarian Program**, for applicants living in their home country and subject to persecution.



In 1994, an estimated 250,000 Rwandans fled to neighbouring Tanzania over a 24-hour period © UNHCR/P.Mountziz

- **Emergency Rescue**, for applicants who are living in or outside their home country and who are in urgent need of protection because there is an immediate threat to their life and security; and
- **Woman at Risk**, for female applicants who are subject to persecution or are of concern to UNHCR, are living outside their home country without the protection of a male relative and are in danger of victimisation, harassment or serious abuse because of their gender. This subclass recognises the priority given by UNHCR to the protection of refugee women in particularly vulnerable situations. The annual target for this subclass is 10.5% of all Refugee category visa grants.

Holders of refugee category visas travel to their destination in Australia at the expense of the Australian Government.

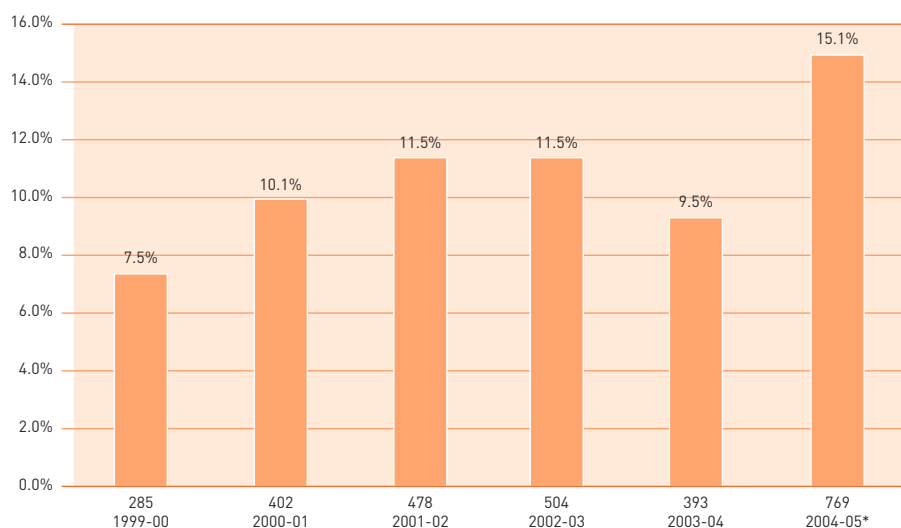


Figure 7—Woman at Risk as Percentage of Total Refugee Grants, 1999–00 to 2004–05

*Outcome from 1 July 2004 to 31 May 2005.

NB. The number of allocated refugee places (and consequently the total number of Woman at Risk grants to date) increased from 4,000 to 6,000 for the 2004–05 program year.

Source: DIMIA

• **Special Humanitarian Program**

The Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) is for people who are subject to substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of their human rights in their home country, are living outside the home country and have links with Australia. Substantial discrimination may occur when individuals or members of a community are deprived of their basic human rights such as access to education, employment, freedom of speech and freedom to practice one's religion on a discriminatory basis.

Applications for SHP visas must be supported by an Australian citizen or permanent resident over 18 years of age, an eligible New Zealand citizen, or an organisation operating in Australia. The person or organisation supporting the SHP applicant is called a proposer and undertakes to help with travel to Australia, accommodation and initial orientation in Australia if the applicant is successful.

Temporary Visas—Secondary Movement

The temporary visas are also known as Secondary Movement visas. They are granted to people who are subject to persecution or substantial discrimination in their home country and who have moved beyond a country where they had access to effective protection to a country of their choice. This category was introduced in September 2001 along with other changes intended to discourage refugees from abandoning or bypassing protection in another country in order to seek entry to Australia.

There are two visa subclasses in the Secondary Movement category:

- **Offshore entry**, for people who entered Australia unlawfully at certain offshore places¹. Holders may remain in Australia for up to three years in the first instance and apply for a TPV (or a permanent visa, if eligible under the new TPV measures described in chapter 3); and
- **Relocation**, for secondary movers who are outside Australia. Holders of this visa may remain in Australia for up to five years in the first instance and apply for a permanent protection visa.

Secondary movers who were transferred to processing centres in the Republic of Nauru and Papua New Guinea (PNG) had either entered Australia illegally at offshore excised places or were intercepted on their way to Australia. Their claims for protection were initially assessed by DIMIA or UNHCR and those found to be refugees have been resettled in Australia, New Zealand and a number of other countries. Many of those found not to be refugees have returned to their home countries and have been assisted with a reintegration package by the Australian Government.

Visas granted under the Offshore Humanitarian Program

The 2003–04 outcome for the offshore component of the Humanitarian Program was the highest in eight years.

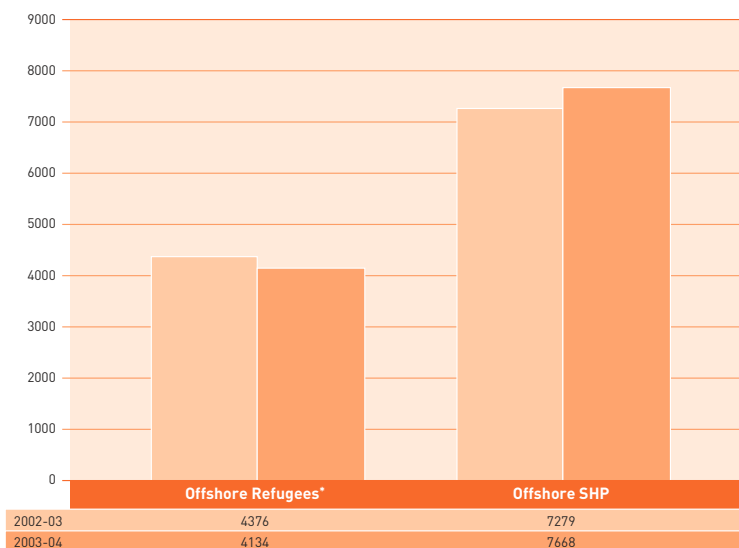


Figure 8—Offshore Visa Grants, 2002–03 and 2003–04

*Includes Secondary Movement visas.

Source: DIMIA

In 2003–04, the Refugee component was increased by 50% from 4000 to 6000 places.

This will be reflected in the 2004–05 statistics.

¹ These are places within Australian territory where people have entered (or are likely to enter) Australia illegally. These places have been excised from the migration zone for the purpose of visa applications. If a person arrives in Australia unlawfully at one of these excised places they can only be considered for an offshore temporary visa.



DIMIA officers conduct interviews of applicants overseas. © DIMIA

Assessment of applications for resettlement

People seeking resettlement in Australia apply for a Refugee and Humanitarian visa. Claims for resettlement are assessed against the criteria for all seven visa subclasses within the Refugee and Humanitarian class in order to determine whether the applicant is eligible for the grant of any one of these visas. If an applicant is eligible for the grant of more than one visa the most beneficial visa will always be granted to the applicant.

While most applications are processed by DIMIA officers in our overseas missions, some applications, which are accompanied by proposals, are processed in DIMIA's humanitarian processing centres in Australia. For details on application lodgement procedures please refer to DIMIA'S website at www.immi.gov.au

The selection criteria for resettlement in Australia are set down in the Migration Regulations 1994 and are designed to ensure that visas are granted to applicants with a compelling humanitarian need for resettlement in Australia. Applicants must be outside Australia at the time of application and decision, as well as satisfy the public interest criteria prescribed by the regulations.

Public interest criteria

By law, all visa applicants must satisfy public interest criteria intended to protect the interests of the Australian community. These are health, character and national security requirements.

Health requirement

The health requirement applies to all applicants for offshore humanitarian visas. It is designed to minimise risks to public health, contain public expenditure on health and community services and safeguard Australians' access to health and community services.

The Immigration Minister may decide to waive the health requirement if there is no threat to public health and safety and the applicant's circumstances are so compelling that they outweigh the cost to the Australian community.

Character and similar requirements

Other public interest criteria help to protect Australia against the entry of people who pose a danger to the community or a threat to community harmony, place national security at risk or prejudice Australia's foreign relations.

Family reunion

During humanitarian crises and flight to safety, families sometimes become separated. There are provisions for separated immediate family members² of humanitarian entrants to reunite with the humanitarian entrant in Australia under the resettlement program. This can be done under the split family provisions of the resettlement program. The humanitarian visa holder in Australia is required to propose the entry of immediate family members to Australia. The family members overseas are required to provide any available evidence of the relationship to the proposer and meet public interest criteria. Humanitarian entrants may also apply to sponsor family under other family migration categories.

² Members of immediate family include spouse, dependent children or, if the visa holder is under 18 years of age, parents.

As described previously under visa subclasses, the SHP also provides a means of humanitarian entry for people with family or other ties to Australia. In the case of the SHP, the applicant does not have to be an immediate family member of the proposer but the proposer undertakes to help the entrant meet the cost of travel to Australia and provide initial settlement assistance in Australia. While the SHP is not primarily a family reunion program, it enables entrants to identify people in similar circumstances overseas who would benefit from resettlement.

Regional focus of the resettlement program

Each year the government sets regional priorities for the program. Planning allocations for overseas posts are decided on the basis of regional priorities. The last ten years have seen the regional focus shift from South-East Asia and Central America to the former Yugoslavia, the Middle East and South-West Asia, and now Africa, in line with changes in global resettlement needs.

These priorities help decision makers to focus on those most in need of resettlement but they are not program targets or quotas. All applications are assessed on a case by case basis, taking into account resettlement needs.

| Rank | 1999–2000 | | 2000–01 | | 2001–02 | | 2002–03 | | 2003–04 | | 2004–05* | |
|------|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| 1 | Europe | 45.64% | Europe | 43.32% | Africa | 33.12% | Africa | 48.30% | Africa | 70.78% | Africa | 68.79% |
| 2 | Middle East & SW Asia | 29.43% | Middle East & SW Asia | 26.96% | Middle East & SW Asia | 32.43% | Middle East & SW Asia | 39.96% | Middle East & SW Asia | 24.29% | Middle East & SW Asia | 26.06% |
| 3 | Africa | 23.14% | Africa | 25.43% | Europe | 32.03% | Europe | 9.94% | Europe | 3.00% | Asia | 4.78% |
| 4 | Asia | 1.51% | Asia | 3.95% | Asia | 2.23% | Asia | 1.78% | Asia | 1.87% | Europe | 0.30% |
| 5 | Americas | 0.28% | Americas | 0.34% | Americas | 0.19% | Americas | 0.03% | Americas | 0.06% | Americas | 0.07% |

Figure 9—Resettlement Program Grants by Region: 1999–2000 to 2003–04 and anticipated regional outcome for 2004–05

*Anticipated regional outcome for 2004–05 program year.

Source: DIMIA

Africa

Africa is the current priority region for resettlement internationally and in Australia. Armed conflict and civil disorder have affected many groups of people in Africa. Political stabilisation and the management of population flows present significant challenges.

While regional bodies such as the Organisation for African Unity look for solutions within Africa, UNHCR is looking at comprehensive solutions that involve all three durable solutions to resolve complex caseloads in this region. Nationalities identified by UNHCR for resettlement from the Africa region in 2005 include Liberians, Sierra Leoneans, Congolese, Rwandans, Burundians, Eritreans, Ethiopians, Somalis and Sudanese.

In 2003–04 close to 71% of visa grants under the resettlement program went to the Africa region. It is anticipated that in 2004–05, around 70% of the program will come from this region.

The largest nationality group resettled in the past two years is Sudanese. More than 10,000 Sudanese have arrived in Australia over recent years. However, as a result of the Sudanese peace process³, UNHCR hopes that the numbers of Sudanese in need of resettlement will decline during 2005 and beyond. It is expected that there will still be some Sudanese, particularly vulnerable individuals such as woman at risk cases, who will continue to be in need of resettlement.

Middle East and South-West Asia

In addition to the countries of the Middle East, this region includes Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Over the last decade Australia has taken significant numbers of refugees from the Middle East and South West Asia as a result of the Gulf War, conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the targeting of minority ethnic groups for human rights abuses.

Over 3.5 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan but there are still some Afghans outside Afghanistan for whom resettlement is the most appropriate durable solution. Countries neighbouring Iraq such as Jordan, Syria and Lebanon have temporary protection regimes in place for Iraqis. While there are some voluntary returns of Iraqis, it is hoped the situation in Iraq will continue to stabilise so that large scale repatriation could occur.

Limitations for voluntary repatriations to Iraq combined with limited possibilities for local integration in the region makes resettlement the only viable solution for significant numbers of refugees. More than 23,000 Iraqis have been resettled in Australia since 1991.

In 2003–04, over 24% of all visas granted under the offshore component of the Humanitarian program were processed by Australian missions in the Middle East and South-West Asia. In 2004–05 it is anticipated that around 25% of the program will come from this region.

Europe

The conflict in former Yugoslavia resulted in the displacement of more than 3.5 million people, the largest displacement of people in Europe since World War II. Australia has resettled close to 41,000 people from the countries of former Yugoslavia since the conflict began there in 1991. In recent years voluntary repatriation, improvements in security and changes to citizenship legislation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have diminished the need for resettlement from this region.

In 2003–04, 3% of all visas granted under the offshore component of the Humanitarian Program were for people from Europe.



Rebuilding in Afghanistan
© UNHCR/L.Slezic, Global Aware

³ The peace process between the Sudanese government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement on power-sharing and the administration of three disputed regions is aimed at resolving issues needed to end Sudan's 21-year civil war.



Refugee camp on Thai-Myanmar border. © DIMIA

Other regions

In line with global resettlement needs, less than 2% of offshore humanitarian visas were granted outside the above three priority regions in 2003–04. In Asia, some of the ethnic minorities identified by UNHCR as in need of resettlement are Laotian Hmong and Myanmarese in Thailand, Myanmarese Rohingyas and Chins in Malaysia and Bhutanese in Nepal.

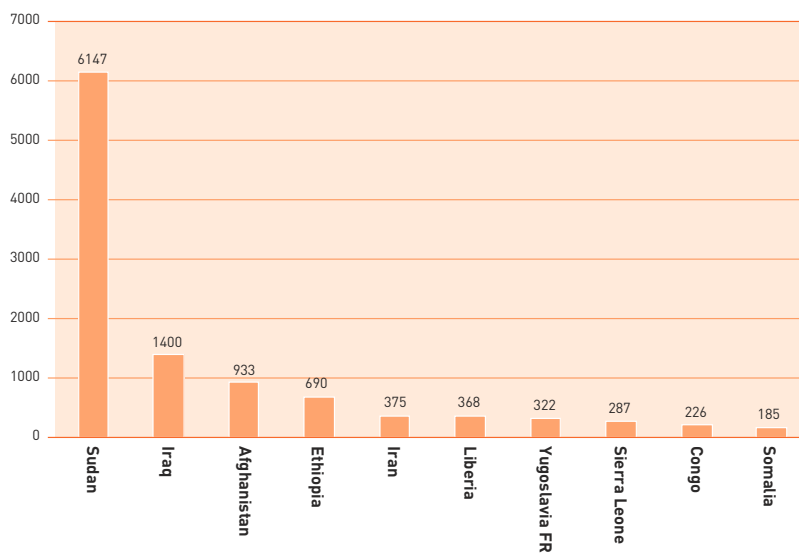


Figure 10—Top 10 Countries of Birth for Offshore Visa Grants: 2003–04 Humanitarian Program

Source: DIMIA

Recent initiatives to enhance the resettlement program

Changes to the international environment, difficulties of processing in remote locations and technological innovations have created operational challenges for DIMIA in meeting the Government's objectives for the Humanitarian Program. These challenges have led to new processing initiatives that continue to be evaluated and expanded to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the program.

Global processing and onshore lodgement of offshore humanitarian applications

Initial processing of SHP applications from the Africa and Middle East regions has been transferred to humanitarian processing centres in New South Wales and Victoria respectively. This arrangement provides an opportunity for better communication with proposers and allows overseas posts to focus more on relationship-building with local implementation partners, such as UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). It has also strengthened the integrity of the SHP and increased the confidence of proposers in the processes.

These arrangements were further enhanced by legislative changes that required SHP applications from Africa and the Middle East to be lodged at DIMIA offices in Sydney and Melbourne respectively. This has reduced the time and resources required to transfer cases from offshore to onshore and improved processing arrangements further.

SHP medicals

Prior to May 2004 SHP applicants and proposers were required to pay the cost of medical examinations. Meeting these costs placed financial strains on many people. In May 2004, the Government commenced paying for medical screening of SHP applicants. It is expected that, in 2004–05, approximately 6,000 persons will benefit from this new policy.

A move to assist SHP proposers

The 2004–05 Budget allocated \$2,500,000 to support a no-interest loans scheme that assists SHP proposers meet the cost of entrants' airfares to Australia.

Charter flights from Africa

An Australian Government chartered flight arrived in January 2005 bringing 376 refugees from Guinea. Charters are effective at times when sufficient seats are not available on commercial flights. In order to maintain an even flow of refugees throughout the year another charter arrived in April 2005, bringing further refugees from Guinea.

Increased UNHCR resettlement resources

In order to increase the UNHCR's capacity to identify and refer people in need of resettlement, the Australian Government provided additional funds to UNHCR in 2004 to place two extra resettlement officers in East Africa. DIMIA is considering further funding to UNHCR to improve the registration of refugee populations, status determinations and resettlement processes.

International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) assistance in West Africa

In June 2004, DIMIA engaged ICMC to work with UNHCR and NGOs in Guinea to identify and refer refugees to Australia for resettlement. The arrangement exceeded expectations in terms of the number of referrals with over 2,200 people being referred by the end of the contract in February 2005.

Cultural orientation

In 2003 DIMIA piloted pre-embarkation cultural orientation training to humanitarian entrants through IOM in Nairobi. After a successful pilot this has been extended worldwide. See chapter 5 for further details on cultural orientation.

Mobile team visits

Mobile teams of Australian officers providing supplementary support to the Department's overseas posts have been used since 2003–04. They assist in interviewing refugee and humanitarian visa applicants. The timing of these visits depends on operational requirements at overseas missions. In 2004–05, 13 mobile team visits are expected to be undertaken to the Africa and Middle East regions. These visits help Australian officers located overseas to grant visas, speed up processing times and support better liaison with our international processing partners.

Application Processing time

Measures introduced such as onshore processing of applications, mobile team visits and payment of SHP medicals have enabled the Department to significantly reduce the time taken to process visa applications. The following tables demonstrate changes in finalisation and visa grant times in recent years:

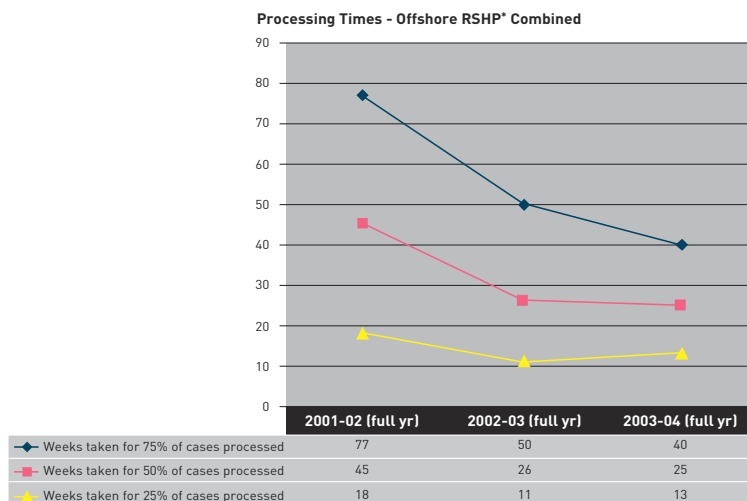


Figure 11—Offshore RSHP* Finalisation** Times: 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04

Source: DIMIA

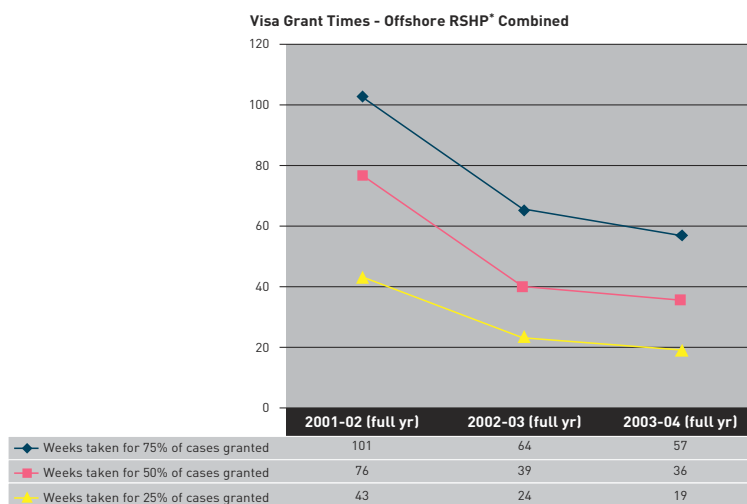


Figure 12—Offshore RSHP* Grant Times: 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04

Source: DIMIA

* RSHP—Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program

** Finalisations include both grants and refusals

Ziad Rashid's story

My name is Ziad Rashid. I am Kurdish from Karkouk in Iraq. I was born in 1966 and I finished university in 1988. I was forced to join the Iraqi army in the same year, after the Iraqi's invasion of Kuwait. I left Iraq and lived in the United Nations camps in Syria for 3 years. Finally I left Syria for Lebanon in 1994.

I was recognised by the UN as a refugee in Lebanon and for 13 years I was waiting for resettlement in any place in the world. However, refugees are not recognised in Lebanon, so the Lebanese authorities deported me to the North of Iraq because of my illegal situation.

I tried desperately to go back to Lebanon to be reunited with my wife and family, and to realise our last hope to leave the Middle East for any place in the world. Somehow I managed to re-enter Lebanon in February 2002.

Considering the risk for me of being caught again, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office in Beirut agreed to resettle me and they suggested Australia to me.

After 2 years in Lebanon I arrived in Adelaide on 7 May 2004.

Since I've been in Australia I feel like we have been born again. Of course, in this country a family can live better and happier than any other place in the world. I have learned the English language and I am now planning to buy some land to set up a farm and live a free and peaceful life, the life that I never saw or felt before.

My wife and I would like to say thank you for every thing offered from the Australian Government and its people.

Australia, of course, is a haven for everyone, especially for refugees and I hope to spend my life peacefully in my second country Australia.



Chapter Five: Settlement services for holders of Humanitarian Program visas: Adjusting to life in Australia

Adjusting to a new life in another country presents significant challenges. For humanitarian entrants, the trials of adjustment often come on top of a traumatic personal history. The Government views successful settlement as a key objective of Australia's Humanitarian Program. For this reason Australia offers one of the most comprehensive settlement programs in the world for humanitarian entrants.

The settlement process begins with Australian cultural orientation training prior to departure for Australia and, once in Australia, connection to essential services such as Centrelink and Medicare and the provision of appropriate accommodation. After this comes the more gradual process of establishing a livelihood and social networks and gaining a comprehensive understanding of the Australian community. For some, specialised medical treatment and counselling will be needed. Our settlement services aim to give humanitarian entrants settled in Australia every opportunity to reach their full potential and realise their hopes and ambitions for themselves and their families as quickly as possible.

A broad range of government services is available to permanent humanitarian entrants, that is, Refugees, SHP entrants and permanent protection visa holders. Holders of temporary protection visas and other temporary humanitarian visas have access to a range of government services consistent with temporary stay in Australia. Those services are outlined in chapters 3 and 4 under temporary protection visas and secondary movement visas.

Specialised Services Available to Permanent Humanitarian Visa holders

DIMIA's publication, *Australia's Support for Humanitarian Entrants* (available at www.immi.gov.au), provides a comprehensive account of assistance available to permanent humanitarian visa holders. Below is a brief summary of these services.

The Australian Cultural Orientation Program (AUSCO)

AUSCO aims to provide successful permanent humanitarian visa applicants overseas with an understanding of the social, political and legal aspects of Australian culture, education and employment opportunities in Australia and services available to humanitarian entrants in Australia. It also seeks to create realistic expectations about settlement processes and prepares entrants for the long journey to Australia.

The Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS)

In recognition that permanent humanitarian entrants require specialised services, the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy was introduced to provide intensive, initial and tailored settlement support to holders of Refugee and SHP visas. The IHSS also provides some support to permanent protection visa holders, whose need for intensive settlement support is generally less than that of resettled Refugees and SHP entrants because they have been living within the Australian community for some time.

Under the IHSS, contracted service providers deliver the following:

- **Initial Information and Orientation Assistance** provides information and service coordination and links entrants to the services they need in the initial stages of settlement.
- **Accommodation Support** offers entrants accommodation on arrival in Australia and assists them to locate longer-term accommodation as soon as possible.
- **Household Formation Support** provides entrants with a basic package of material goods to start establishing a household in Australia.
- **Early Health Assessment and Intervention** helps entrants overcome physical and psychological health problems and encourages health care providers to be sensitive to the needs of humanitarian entrants.
- **Proposer Support** helps proposers to fulfil their role of assisting SHP entrants to settle. This includes help with access to entrant pre-arrival information resources and a post-arrival 'help' service through which further information and guidance are available.

In addition, volunteer groups assist service providers and offer entrants friendship and social support.

Long term settlement services available to migrants

In addition to specialised services listed above, Refugee and SHP entrants and permanent protection visa holders have access to the following long term settlement services that are offered to all migrants:

- **The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)** assists new arrivals to develop basic English language skills and provides general orientation to participate in the wider Australian community.
- **The Translating and Interpreting Service** provides telephone and on-site interpreting and translation, helping entrants overcome language barriers, thereby facilitating their access to services and successful participation in the Australian community.
- **Migrant Community Services** are provided through:
 - the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) / Migrant Service Agency (MSA) network; and
 - the Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS).

Services offered by these community organisations are complementary to and concurrent with IHSS services, but do not duplicate IHSS services. They include:

- the provision of settlement information and referral to other service providers;
- helping to strengthen the community's capacity to organise, plan and advocate for services to meet their own needs; and
- raising awareness of entrants' needs amongst mainstream service providers.



General government services available to the Australian community

These government services are designed for the broader Australian community and are available to all permanent humanitarian entrants. They are work rights, access to job network, Medicare, Health Care Card (if assessed as eligible), Maternity Allowance (if assessed as eligible), Program of Assistance for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma (PASTT), public education, Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), Centrelink income support, rent assistance and family tax benefit.

Settlement assistance to Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors

An Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minor (UHM) is a minor (under 18 years of age) who has been granted a visa under the Humanitarian Program and who does not have a parent to care for them in Australia.



Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHM) © UNHCR/P.Press

Some UHM's have a relative over the age of 21 to provide care for them in Australia. Those who do not have a relative over the age of 21 in Australia become a ward of the immigration minister. The Minister's functions as guardian are delegated to officers of the child welfare authority in each State and Territory.

The UHM Program

The UHM Program is administered by State child welfare authorities which provide welfare supervision and support to UHMs. This support is provided through cost share arrangements between the Commonwealth and States. For further details on the UHM Program, please refer to the publication, *Australia's Support for Humanitarian Entrants* (available at www.immi.gov.au).

IHSS services for UHMs

When a UHM arrives in Australia under the care of a relative, IHSS-contracted service providers assess their need for IHSS services, taking into account the support they will receive through the UHM Program.

Settlement locations of permanent humanitarian entrants

The settlement location of Refugees and SHP entrants in Australia is determined by a number of factors:

- Entrants with family or friends in Australia prefer to settle near them. The social support available from family and friends improves settlement prospects of entrants. In the case of SHP entrants, settlement near their proposers also allows proposers to fulfil their obligations to assist the entrant.
- For Refugee entrants with no family or friends in Australia, DIMIA decides on a location where they are most likely to have a successful settlement experience. This decision takes into account a range of factors such as specific settlement needs of entrants, available services to meet those needs including health care, accommodation, education, employment and the presence of communities of similar origin.



Humanitarian entrants in Adelaide use their new bank accounts

Regional settlement

The Australian Government is committed to increasing the settlement of entrants under both Humanitarian and Migration Programs in regional locations, to decrease pressure on major metropolitan cities, contribute to the long-term development aims of Australia's regional towns and cities, and help to address labour shortages in these areas. .

Regional Australia may provide the best settlement opportunities for some humanitarian entrants, particularly those who have come from rural backgrounds or who have skills suited to employment opportunities available in those areas. With the help of IHSS, humanitarian entrants have settled in regional locations such as Goulburn, Warrnambool, Mandurah, Coffs Harbour, Newcastle, Wagga Wagga, Toowoomba, Launceston and the north west coast of Tasmania. The Australian Government is also seeking to establish new regional humanitarian settlement locations, where appropriate services and opportunities exist or can be developed, in close consultation with state, territory and local governments, service providers and key local stakeholders.



Catherine Okerenyang's story

44

Chapter Five: Settlement services for holders of Humanitarian Program visas:
Adjusting to life in Australia

"The difference is that in Australia I have never felt scared. I just feel so safe here.

We left Uganda in 1987, just when the current Government came to power and rebel forces took over the area where we lived. The rebels hunted down new recruits to help fight against the Government. They were ruthless. They would come out at night and randomly kidnap young men and women. Four of my husband's cousins were kidnapped—one of them has never returned.

We were living in small huts, like grass houses. You couldn't sleep at night—all you could hear was bang bang bang, the sound of shooting. There was just no way you could sleep. You just couldn't close your eyes because you were just so scared they would turn up at anytime.

My family and I decided to make the dangerous journey and escape our town, Soroti, by foot. We had to sleep behind bushes next to wild animals and snakes, but it seemed also the animals knew there was war and they did not hurt us. We ran and ran for three days and at one point we were separated from our parents. We continued frantically to search for them, but to no avail. But then, by amazing chance, in the darkness of the following night, we found them. I will never forget that.

My sister, niece and I finally crossed into Kenya with the help of a relative. We entered a refugee camp and stayed for one and a half years. We were assessed by UNHCR as refugees and then released from the camp. At this time, I went to a Kenyan college and started a course in design and hairdressing. But our life there was only temporary and our application to resettle in Australia was successful. In 1991 after four years in Kenya, we made the long journey to a rural Australian town called Wagga Wagga.

I was so excited, but at the same time so nervous that I was physically ill. I had no idea what to expect.

We were the first African family to settle in Wagga Wagga. At that time it was a small town and people used to stare at me like they had never seen a black person before. Sometimes I got homesick and wondered if I really could stay here forever, but now I just love it and Wagga Wagga has grown so much. Now we are one of 20 African families here.

Once in Australia I went to TAFE and completed my High School Certificate. I then went on to continue my previous studies in design and I completed an Advanced Certificate in Fashion. Luckily I soon found work in a bridal wear store.

I married a Ugandan in 2001 and am now a mother of two young boys.

In addition to being a mum, my life in Australia is constantly busy with two jobs. In December 2004 I opened my own African store 'Afro Look' in central Wagga Wagga, which sells African hair and skin care products, African bags and we plait and braid hair in African styles. This is something that was not available in Wagga Wagga until recently! I also work as a meat processor on weekday mornings.

I will never forget my efforts to adjust to the Australian way of life and survive my first winter in Wagga Wagga. There were very hard times and life has not always been easy. But now I happily call Wagga Wagga home and I just love my life here in Australia. Thanks to the refugee program, my children will never fear for their lives as we did back in Uganda."

Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council

The Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council or RRAC advises the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs on matters relating to the settlement of humanitarian entrants and migrants. Council members are appointed on the basis of their knowledge and expertise in settlement issues and services. The aim of RRAC is to improve the information flow on settlement policy between the Government and the community sector.

The Council's terms of reference include advising the Minister on matters relating to the implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants; the appropriateness and adequacy of Australian Government services, especially for humanitarian entrants; and priorities for attention in the planning of settlement services with particular emphasis on improving coordination of service delivery for humanitarian entrants. Priorities for 2004–2007 include advice and input on the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy; a new settlement grants program; the Adult Migrant English Program; and the Translating and Interpreting Service.

How can you help?

46

How can you help?

Become a volunteer

People wishing to assist refugees as volunteers should contact the relevant IHSS service providers. Details of IHSS service providers in your State or Territory, including contact numbers, can be obtained from your local DIMIA office.

Become a Home Tutor

The Home Tutor Scheme, part of the AMEP, helps eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants who cannot attend English classes due to family commitments. Tutoring usually takes place in the informal atmosphere of the migrant's home. Alternatively, volunteers may assist in conversation practice in AMEP classes. Home tutors receive initial and ongoing training, support and access to teaching resources.

People wishing to become a home tutor must speak and write English well and have a few hours available each week for tutoring. For details, contact your local Adult Migrant English Service or telephone DIMIA's enquiry line on 131 881.

Become an AUSTCARE volunteer, donor or fundraiser

AUSTCARE is a long-established Australian non-government organisation which assists refugees overseas to rebuild their lives through social and economic programs and landmine action in partnership with local communities and other agencies.

From time to time AUSTCARE needs volunteers to fill part-time positions in marketing, communications, database management and administration. AUSTCARE also welcomes the support of community groups and individuals in raising funds for refugees around the world. One-off donations, bequests and regular donations to finance special projects are other ways members of the public can support AUSTCARE's work with refugees.

For further information, visit www.austcare.org.au, write to AUSTCARE's National Office at Locked Bag 15, Camperdown NSW 1450, or telephone 1300 66 66 72.

Make a donation to UNHCR

Most of UNHCR's budget comes from donations, above all from governments, but also from non-government organisations and individuals. Donations can be made through Australia for UNHCR, UNHCR's Australian fund-raising agency. For details, visit www.australiaforunhcr.org.au, write to Australia for UNHCR Emergency Appeal, PO Box Q428, Sydney NSW 1230 or info@australiaforunhcr.org.au, or telephone 1300 361 288.

If you would prefer to fund a project, UNHCR can match your interests, objectives and budget from more than 10,000 projects ranging in cost from US\$1,000 to US\$200,000. For more information, visit www.unhcr.ch.



Employer Congratulates Humanitarian Entrant

Ahmed Noraldin has shown that refugees and humanitarian entrants can make a significant contribution to the Australian community. After fleeing war-torn Sudan and entering Australia under the Humanitarian Program, Ahmed is now proudly employed in Rockdale by CDS Gourmet Foods, a division of Nestlé Food Services.

The Manager of CDS Gourmet Foods has described Ahmed as the 'backbone' of the Sydney warehouse operation. The Manager marked the grant of Ahmed's Australian Citizenship in March 2005 by awarding him special recognition for his work. In January 2005, he also won a company award for providing assistance and support to fellow colleagues

Sudanese Settlement Services, which provides support to refugees resettling in Australia, views Ahmed as a role model for Sudanese refugees. Ahmed has successfully utilised his skills and knowledge in Australia, his new home.

Photo caption: Ahmed Noraldin at Nestlé's Rockdale warehouse.





