

## GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS

The Australian Government is committed to providing humanitarian entrants with support to assist them to successfully rebuild their lives in Australia. A broad range of government services is available to humanitarian entrants (refugees, SHP entrants and PPV holders) where they meet certain eligibility requirements. A limited range of government services is available to holders of temporary protection visas.

### Services available to humanitarian entrants

#### The Australian Cultural Orientation Program

In September 2003, a pre-embarkation cultural orientation program was implemented in Kenya to help humanitarian entrants prepare to settle in Australia. The Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) Program aims to provide entrants with the knowledge to improve their settlement prospects, develop realistic expectations of life in Australia and help them acquire information about Australian culture and society prior to arrival.

AUSCO was expanded from Kenya to locations in Egypt, the Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Guinea, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, and Thailand. Since September 2003 almost 400 courses have been held, assisting more than 7 500 entrants.

AUSCO is delivered over a three-day period in the clients' local language. The curriculum covers topics such as the journey to Australia, Australia's political and legal systems, assistance and services provided to humanitarian entrants, health care, transport, employment, and education. Teaching is student centred and uses

methods including simulation, case studies, debates, discussions, problem solving, and role plays.

#### Specialised settlement support for humanitarian entrants

The IHSS provides intensive on-arrival support to refugees and SHP entrants to help them settle in Australia. It aims to help humanitarian entrants achieve self-sufficiency as soon as possible by providing specialised services on a needs basis.

The IHSS provides some support to PPV holders, whose need for intensive settlement support is generally less than refugees and SHP entrants because they have been living in the Australian community for some time. The IHSS provides temporary visa holders access to torture and trauma support.

Contracted service providers deliver a suite of specialised services which includes:

- > **Initial Information and Orientation Assistance (IIOA)** provides information and links entrants to the services they need in the initial stages of settlement.
- > **Accommodation Support (AS)** offers entrants accommodation on arrival and assists them to secure long-term accommodation as soon as possible.
- > **Household Formation Support (HFS)** provides entrants with a basic package of material goods to start establishing a household.
- > **Early Health Assessment and Intervention (EHA)** helps entrants to overcome physical and psychological health problems and encourages health care providers to be sensitive to the needs of humanitarian entrants.

**Table 2:** Support available for humanitarian entrants under the IHSS

IHSS services	Refugees	SHP entrants
Initial information and orientation assistance	✓	✓
Accommodation support	✓	✓
Household formation support	✓	✓
Early Health Assessment and Intervention	✓	✓
Proposer Support	x	✓

\*PPV/TPV/THV/RPV and RPBV holders are eligible for EHAI only when they access the service upon entering the community.

- › **Proposer Support (PS)** helps proposers to fulfil their role of assisting SHP entrants to settle.

Humanitarian entrants are eligible for support under the IHSS, on a needs basis (Table 2).

The intensive assistance provided under the IHSS is intended for the initial settlement period, which in most cases is about six months.

When humanitarian entrants exit the IHSS, they are referred to general settlement services provided through Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), Migrant Service Agencies (MSAs) and organisations funded under the Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS).

### Specialised settlement support for unaccompanied humanitarian minors

Unaccompanied humanitarian minors are covered by the *Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946* (the IGOC Act) which ensures that minors who arrive in Australia unaccompanied have a legal guardian. Minors subject to the IGOC Act become wards of the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

An unaccompanied humanitarian minor (UHM) is a person who:

- › has been granted a visa under the Humanitarian Program either in Australia or overseas
- › is under the age of 18
- › does not have a parent to care for them in Australia but may have close relatives to provide care and support.

UHMs are separated into two categories:

- › **Wards**—non-citizen minors who do not have a parent or an adult relative to care for them in Australia. The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs becomes the guardian of wards.
- › **Non-wards**—non-citizen minors who do not have a parent, but do have a relative over the age of 21 to provide care and support for them in Australia. The Minister is not the guardian of non-wards.

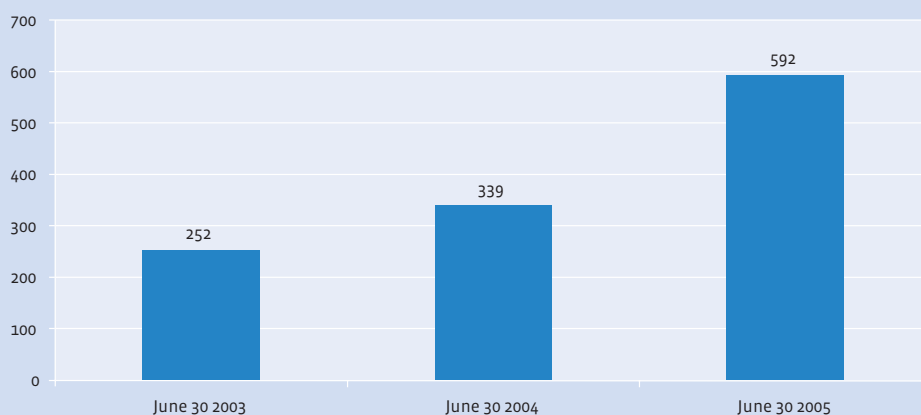
Ministerial guardianship continues until the ward turns 18 years of age, leaves Australia permanently, becomes an Australian citizen, or the Minister directs that the ward will not be covered by the Act. This may occur, for example, when the minor is adopted or when a relative over 21 takes responsibility for them.

The Minister delegates functions as guardian to officers of the child welfare authority in each state and territory. These agencies have the established infrastructure and expertise to provide welfare, supervision and support in accordance with the IGOC Act and state and territory welfare laws on behalf of the Minister.

At 30 June 2005, there were 592 UHMs in the program, 253 more than the same time last year. This increase is primarily due to the larger number of UHMs arriving from Africa as members of families and extended families.

Of the 592 minors in the UHM program at 30 June 2005 (Chart 3), 10 per cent (58) were wards of the Minister, while the remaining 90 per cent (534) were non-wards.

**Chart 3:** Unaccompanied humanitarian minors (UHMs) in Australia as at 30 June 2005



### Long-term settlement services

The following mainstream settlement services are available to humanitarian entrants.

#### The Adult Migrant English Program

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) has two core functions:

- > assist new arrivals to develop basic English language skills
- > provide general orientation to new arrivals to help them participate in the wider Australian society and access available services.

The AMEP provides up to 510 hours of English tuition to help new entrants settle into, and participate in, Australian society. AMEP clients can choose from a range of learning options including:

- > full-time and part-time classroom or community based tuition
- > distance learning courses
- > one-on-one language assistance in the home with the help of a volunteer
- > self-paced learning in Individual Learning Centres.

Additional hours are available to some humanitarian entrants who qualify for special assistance under the Special Preparatory Program (SPP). The SPP offers tuition in a specially tailored, supportive environment to eligible humanitarian entrants assessed as having special needs arising from their pre-migration

experiences, for example, torture, trauma, or low levels of schooling. The SPP helps clients become familiar with the learning process before they go on to the more formal environment of the AMEP.

As well as learning basic English skills, AMEP students learn about Australian society, culture and customs and are linked with other services and agencies which are vital for their successful settlement. AMEP classes also provide a place in which friendships develop between people from all over the world, affirming respect for differences in an encouraging and non-threatening environment. In this way, the AMEP facilitates participation in the Australian community.

In 2001, the Government extended the AMEP curriculum to include “Let’s Participate: A Course in Australian Citizenship”, which enables participants to learn more about the Australian way of life and how to become an Australian citizen. Completion of this course is taken as evidence that the person understands the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship and does not need to demonstrate this at their citizenship interview.

#### The Translating and Interpreting Service

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) provides telephone and on-site interpreting and translations and is an important safety net for those facing language barriers to

successful participation in the community. TIS is an important tool which assists government agencies and government-funded organisations (including IHSS service providers) to provide their services to non-English speaking members of the community.

Humanitarian entrants can access TIS services on a fee-free basis depending on circumstances. Fee-free interpreting services are provided to help humanitarian entrants (Australian citizens or permanent residents) who do not speak English adequately to communicate with doctors, local government authorities, trade unions, parliamentarians, and community based, non-profit and non-government welfare organisations. TIS also provides translation of settlement-related, personal documents for migrants and humanitarian entrants free-of-charge within the first two years of their permanent residence in Australia.

### Migrant community services

Migrant community services assist migrants and humanitarian entrants to participate equitably in Australian society as quickly as possible after arrival. Services are targeted to meet the settlement needs of recently arrived

humanitarian entrants and family stream migrants with low levels of English proficiency. Settlement assistance is through:

- > provision of settlement information and referral services
- > facilitation of community capacity building
- > promotion of client needs to mainstream service providers.

Services are provided through MRCs/MSAs networks and organisations funded under the CSSS. From 1 July 2006, these will be combined to form the Settlement Grants Program.

MRCs/MSAs and CSSS organisations provide complementary services to humanitarian entrants receiving IHSS assistance, but do not duplicate IHSS services.

### Departmental funding of services for humanitarian entrants

Table 5 provides an overview of the department's expenditure on services which assisted humanitarian entrants in 2004–05. Humanitarian settlement services are exclusively targeted at humanitarian entrants. Humanitarian entrants are also a significant proportion of the target groups of the other settlement services included in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Long-term settlement services available to humanitarian entrants

Long-term settlement services	Refugees	SHP entrants	PPV holders
Migrant Resource Centres/ Migrant Service Agencies/ Community Settlement Services Scheme	✓	✓	✓
Adult Migrant English Program	✓	✓	✓
Translating and Interpreting Service	✓	✓	✓
English as a second language for new arrivals (school aged minors)	✓	✓	✓

**Table 5:** Departmental expenditure on services available to humanitarian entrants

Settlement services	2004–05 expenditure \$million
Humanitarian settlement services	44.7
Fee-free TIS	5.9
AMEP—tuition, accommodation and related expenses	118.3
Grants for migrant community services	27.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>196.5</b>

## General government services available to humanitarian entrants

Support is also available to humanitarian entrants through mainstream government services. Table 6 provides an overview of other government services available to humanitarian entrants and guidance on eligibility. Detailed information about eligibility is available from relevant government agencies.

**Table 6: Services available to humanitarian entrants by eligibility**

Employment	Refugees	SHP entrants	PPV holders
Work rights	✓	✓	✓
Job Network *	✓	✓	✓
<b>Health</b>			
Medicare	✓	✓	✓
Health care card	✓	✓	✓
Maternity allowance	✓	✓	✓
Program of Assistance for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma (PASTT)	✓	✓	✓
<b>Education</b>			
Public	✓	✓	✓
Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)	✓	✓	✓
New apprenticeship	✓	✓	✓
<b>Centrelink income support</b>			
Special benefit	✓	✓	✓
Family assistance office payments	✓	✓	✓
Rent assistance (as part of special benefit)	✓	✓	✓
Child care benefit	✓	✓	✓
Double orphan pension	✓	✓	✓
Low-income health care card	✓	✓	✓

**Note:** for access to the above services an entrant must be assessed as eligible by the relevant service provider. Entrants may also be eligible for other government services/benefits.

\*Type of support varies according to whether the humanitarian entrant is a temporary or permanent visa holder.



## SHAMOUN KOKO ABDALLA (SUDAN)

Before being arrested in late 1998 Shamoun Koko Abdalla spent his days looking after his wife and four children and organising activities and prayer sessions for his local church.

He would lead discussion groups with fellow Catholics around issues such as violence and poverty, and talk about ways to encourage people to respect others, embrace religion and live with courage.

Sometimes the meetings would take place in his home. This proved to be the trigger for his arrest, as Sudanese government troops suspected he was secretly leading meetings of the anti-government Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).

"They took me to gaol, punished me and beat me. They found no proof that I had a connection to the SPLM/A so they let me go, but they'd often come back to my home. If they see something they don't like, they'll just take you," Shamoun said.

Shamoun spent three months in gaol. Within a month of his release he set about putting his life on a dramatically different course.

He escaped Sudan to Egypt with his family. He knew it would be dangerous—the country was crawling with government troops and violent outbreaks occurred daily.

"I prepared the documents we needed and we fled at night. The children were sad and scared. They kept asking where we were going. I told them, 'When we reach the place, I will tell you.' I really felt for my family," Shamoun said.

They reached Cairo in 1999 and stayed for two years. They then applied for resettlement in Australia through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The family arrived in Tasmania in 2001 and were met by members of the Sudanese community and two volunteers from the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) who took them to accommodation provided by DIMIA.

The MRC is one of many centres DIMIA provides funding to, to support newly arrived humanitarian entrants under the IHSS.

The volunteers also helped the family locate long-term accommodation, as well as furniture and household materials.

They also assisted Shamoun and his wife Salwa to enrol in English lessons provided through the Adult Migrant English Program.

Shamoun's English improved quickly and he soon felt confident enough to look for a job.

Initially he found short-term seasonal work in the fruit-picking and wine-making industries, and then secured employment with Bradken, which manufactures products for the mining, mineral processing, rail, and industrial sectors.

He enjoys the work and is grateful to the MRC.

"The volunteers were great, they supported us a lot. When we needed their help, they were always there. Even now sometimes I call them to ask about services, and they always help," Shamoun said.

Shamoun is also thankful to the Australian Government for giving his family a new life.

"Australia is a safe place, the community has been welcoming and life is good," he said. "My family have many more opportunities here, and my children can go to school, learn and eventually get jobs. I want to say thank you on behalf of me and my family."

## IHSS ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO HUMANITARIAN ENTRANTS IN 2004–05

This chapter provides information about the number of people assisted under the IHSS in 2004–05 and the locations in which they received assistance.

### **A note on the correlation between the 2004–05 Humanitarian Program and the 2004–05 IHSS**

In analysing the data relating to the number of entrants assisted under the IHSS, it is useful to consider the broader context of the Humanitarian Program under which those assisted entered Australia.

This chapter links the number of people who have entered Australia under the Humanitarian Program in 2004–05 with the number assisted under the IHSS for the same period.

While the 2004–05 Humanitarian Program impacted on the number assisted under the IHSS during the same period, it is important to note there is no direct correlation between the number of visas granted under the Humanitarian Program during a particular year and the number assisted under the IHSS. The main reasons for this are:

- › the lag between the time a refugee or SHP entrant is granted a visa and the time they enter Australia and seek assistance under the IHSS. This means that people granted a visa towards the end of a program year will receive assistance under the IHSS in the following program year.
- › Some people granted a visa under the Humanitarian Program might not travel to Australia for a various reasons such as deciding to migrate to an alternative country, change of marital status, death, or illness.

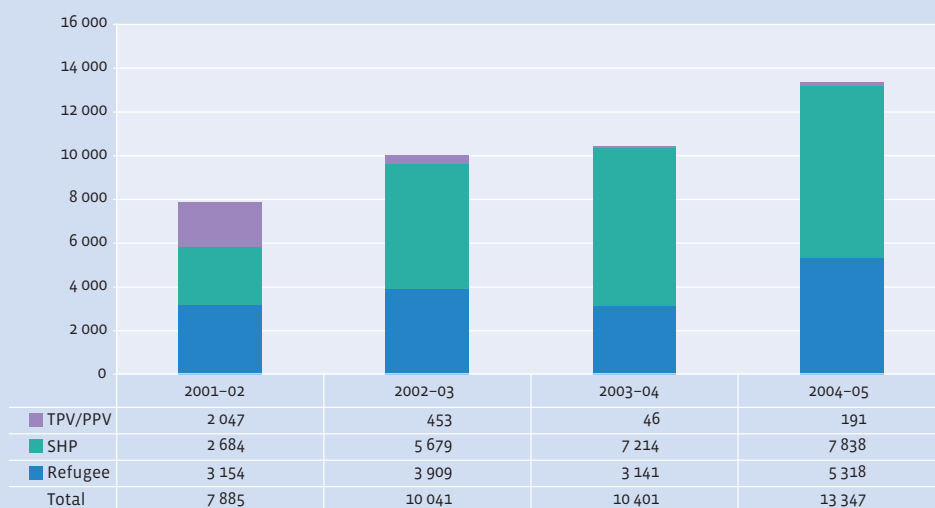
### **Number of people assisted**

The number of people assisted under the IHSS increased from 10 401 in 2003–04 to 13 347 in 2004–05. This continued the upward trend for the previous three years. The increase this year is the single largest since the IHSS was established. The continued reduction in unauthorised arrivals meant that more places were available under the offshore component of the Humanitarian Program, with 92 per cent of the program coming from offshore in 2004–05.

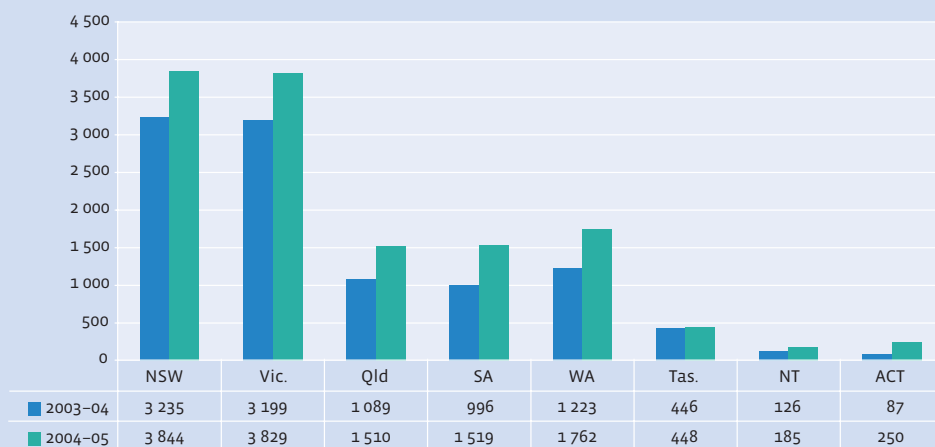
The number of refugees assisted under the IHSS in 2003–04 was approximately 20 per cent lower than the previous program year. In 2004–05, however, there was an increase of approximately 40 per cent. A major factor contributing to the increase was that the Humanitarian Program allocated an additional 2 000 places to refugees, increasing the number to 6 000. The number of SHP entrants assisted by the IHSS also rose in 2004–05 but the increase was marginal. It can be partly attributed to entrants finalising their medical clearances faster, with financial assistance to cover these expenses (Graph 7).

Graph 8 shows the overall increase in the number assisted in each state and territory. Table 9 shows the number of humanitarian entrants assisted under the IHSS by visa category and indicates that for the first time, Victoria assisted more refugees than New South Wales.

**Graph 7:** Number of people assisted under the IHSS 2001–02 to 2004–05



**Graph 8:** Comparison of humanitarian entrants assisted under the IHSS by state/territory 2003–04 to 2004–05



**Table 9:** Comparison of the number of humanitarian entrants assisted under the IHSS by visa category 2002–03 to 2004–05\*

State	Refugees			SHP entrants			TPV/THV/PPV holders			Total		
	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
NSW	1 031	651	1 103	2 437	2 563	2 707	143	21	34	3 611	3 235	3 844
Vic.	719	552	1 155	2 058	2 641	2 635	134	6	39	2 911	3 199	3 829
Qld	582	507	758	380	574	738	10	8	14	972	1 089	1 510
SA	493	492	788	280	495	690	82	9	41	855	996	1 519
WA	609	536	1 046	428	685	714	78	2	2	1 115	1 223	1 762
Tas.	354	296	304	44	150	127	1	0	17	399	446	448
NT	79	87	104	20	39	81	0	0	0	99	126	185
ACT	42	20	60	32	67	146	5	0	44	79	87	250
<b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>3 909</b>	<b>3 141</b>	<b>5 318</b>	<b>5 679</b>	<b>7 214</b>	<b>7 838</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>10 041</b>	<b>10 401</b>	<b>13 347</b>

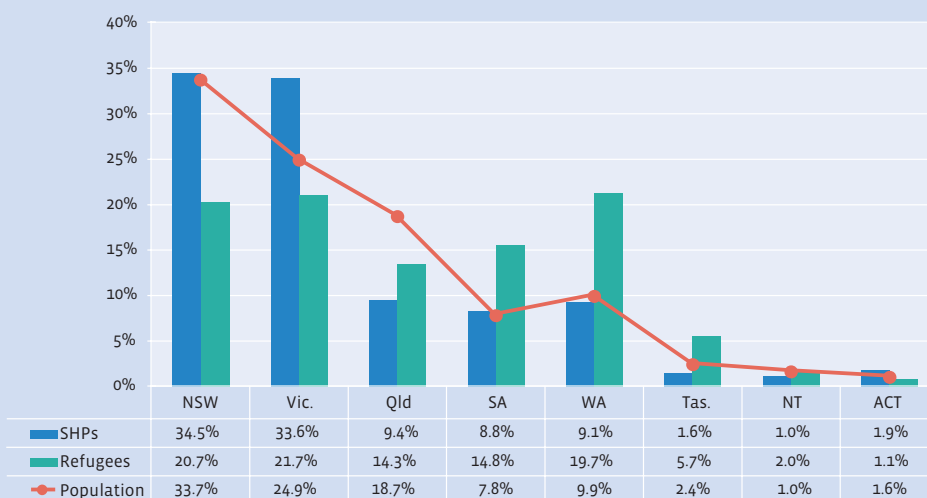
\*Goulburn and Wagga Wagga are administered by the DIMIA ACT Regional Office.

### Distribution by settlement location compared to geographical distribution of Australia's population

Graph 10 shows the distribution by settlement location of refugees and SHP entrants assisted and compares this with the geographical distribution of Australia's population. Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia assisted

the highest proportion of humanitarian entrants relative to their percentage of Australia's population. New South Wales and Victoria continue to assist higher numbers of SHP entrants than refugees. In Queensland the proportion of refugees and SHP entrants assisted is below its percentage of Australia's population.

**Graph 10:** Proportion of humanitarian entrants assisted under the IHSS compared to Australia's national population by settlement location 2004–05\*



\*All Australian population data is from the 2001 Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

## Settlement location and linked status

The settlement location of people assisted under the IHSS is determined by a number of factors, particularly the location of links—that is, family or friends—the entrants may have in Australia. If IHSS entrants have a link, the department seeks to settle them close to that link. Settlement near family and friends provides social support and enhances the settlement prospects of entrants. SHP entrants all have links and settle near their proposer. This allows the proposer to fulfil their obligations to provide settlement assistance to the entrant.

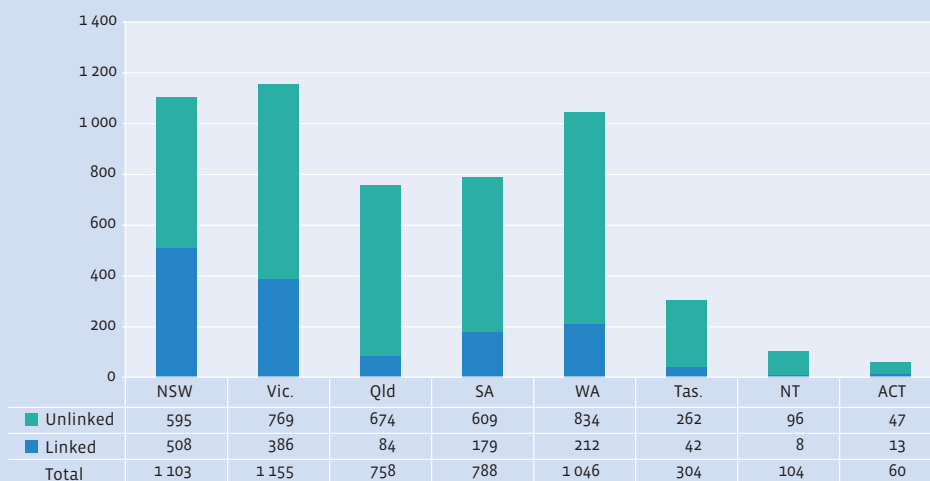
In 2004–05, 70 per cent of people assisted under the IHSS had a link in Australia, compared to 84 per cent in 2003–04. The increased number of refugees and the new source regions (for example Liberia and Burundi) has meant an increase in the number of unlinked refugees. The majority of people with a link were settled

in New South Wales and Victoria, an indication of the established ethnic communities in these states. New South Wales and Victoria assisted 68 per cent of SHP entrants (Graph 10).

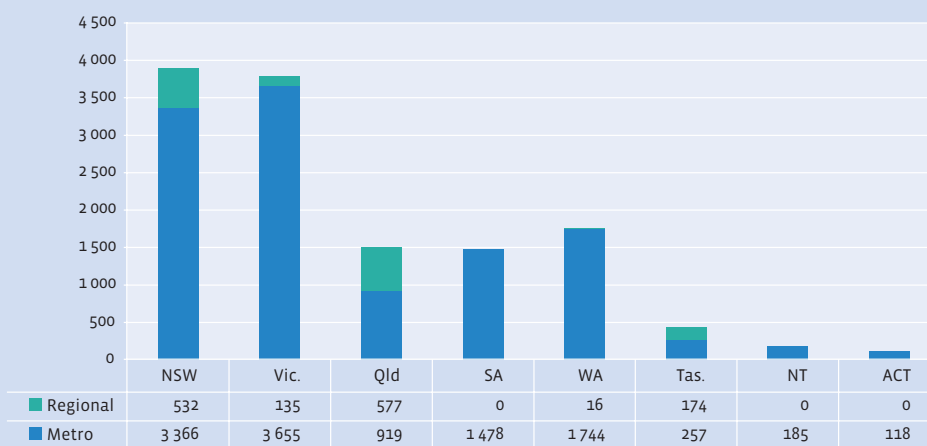
Where refugees have no links in Australia, the department decides on a location where they are most likely to have a positive and successful settlement experience. In making this decision factors are considered such as the settlement needs of the entrants, availability of settlement services, availability of support from communities of similar background, appropriate health services, sustainable accommodation, education, and employment.

In addition, the department considers the preferences of state and territory governments to reduce pressures on large metropolitan areas. Graph 11 shows there were more unlinked refugees assisted than linked refugees in all states and territories.

**Graph 11:** Linked status of refugees assisted under the IHSS in 2004–2005



**Graph 12:** Proportion of people assisted under the IHSS in metropolitan and regional locations 2004–05\*



\*Does not include data for PPV/TPV/THV/RPV/RPBV holders.

### Non-metropolitan settlement

The Australian Government is committed to the increased settlement of non-humanitarian and humanitarian entrants in regional locations. Regional locations are those outside the state and territory capitals.

Regional settlement may provide the best outcomes for some humanitarian entrants, particularly those who have come from a rural background or have skills most suited to finding employment in regional locations.

Increasing settlement in regional Australia will contribute to the long-term development of regional towns and cities, and will help address the labour shortages many regional employers are encountering.

Graph 12 shows the proportion of refugees assisted under the IHSS in metropolitan and regional locations by state and territory. Table 13 shows that 1 434 people (11 per cent) settled in regional locations in 2004–05.

There were no new regional settlement locations established in 2004–05—greater emphasis was placed on strengthening communities in existing areas.

### Number of people assisted each month

Graph 14 shows the number of people who arrived in Australia who accessed the IHSS by month, and reflects a pattern of arrival/access characterised by:

- > a more steady increase in SHP entrants from July 2004 when extra financial assistance was available for medicals
- > a steady increase in the number of refugees until October 2004 followed by a series of spikes for November 2004, January 2005 and April 2005.

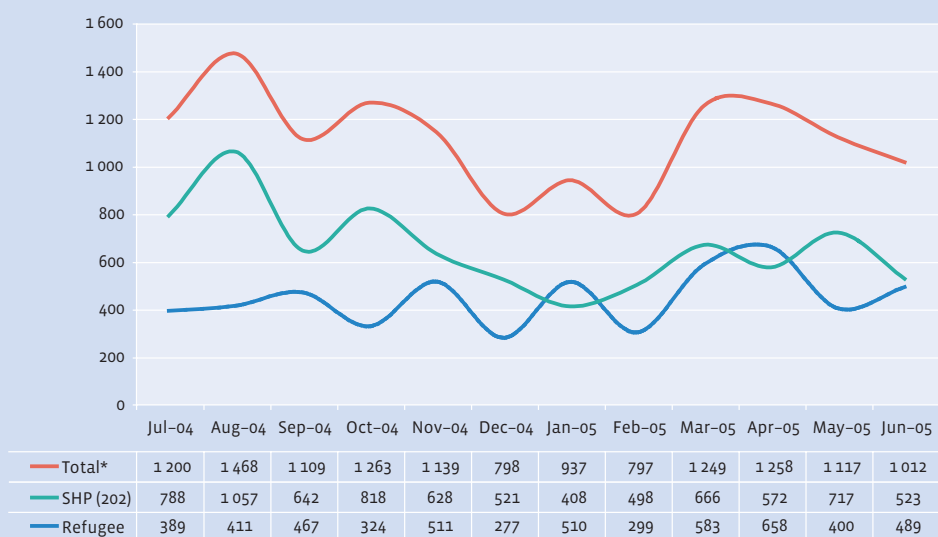
These spikes were caused by the arrival of several groups between October 2004 and April 2005, totalling 1 391 refugee entrants. The decline in the number of SHP entrants between January 2005 and March 2005 was due to peak holiday periods and the difficulty in obtaining flights. Table 15 shows the four major refugee group arrivals, their characteristics, their settlement location, and the number of entrants.

**Table 13: Settlement location of people assisted under the IHSS 2004–05**

State/territory	Settlement location	Refugees	SHP entrants	Total
NSW	Sydney metro	867	2 499	3 366
	Coffs Harbour	36	70	106
	Hunter (Newcastle)	130	115	245
	Illawarra (Wollongong)	70	23	93
	Goulburn*	17	0	17
	Wagga Wagga*	37	34	71
<b>Total NSW</b>		<b>1 157</b>	<b>2 741</b>	<b>3 898</b>
Vic.	Melbourne metro	1 086	2 569	3 655
	Colac	0	30	30
	Geelong	56	25	81
	Shepparton	13	0	13
	Warrnambool	0	11	11
<b>Total Vic.</b>		<b>1 155</b>	<b>2 635</b>	<b>3 790</b>
Qld	Brisbane metro	447	472	919
	Cairns	39	55	94
	Gold Coast	21	14	35
	Logan/Beenleigh/Woodridge	160	54	214
	Toowoomba	73	136	209
	Townsville	18	7	25
<b>Total Qld</b>		<b>758</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>1 496</b>
SA	Adelaide metro	788	690	1 478
<b>Total SA</b>		<b>788</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>1 478</b>
WA	Perth metro	1 030	714	1 744
	Mandurah	16	0	16
<b>Total WA</b>		<b>1 046</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>1 760</b>
Tas.	Hobart metro	157	100	257
	Launceston	138	27	165
	North West Coast	9	0	9
<b>Total Tas.</b>		<b>304</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>431</b>
NT	Darwin metro	104	81	185
<b>Total NT</b>		<b>104</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>185</b>
ACT	Canberra metro	6	112	118
<b>Total ACT*</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>118</b>
Total metro		4 485	7 237	11 722
Total regional		833	601	1 434
<b>Sub total</b>		<b>5 318</b>	<b>7 838</b>	<b>13 156</b>
TPV/THV/PPV/RPV/RPBV holders				191
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>5 318</b>	<b>7 838</b>	<b>13 347</b>

\*The IHSS is administered in Goulburn and Wagga Wagga by the DIMIA ACT Regional Office.

**Graph 14:** Number of people who arrived and accessed the IHSS by month 2004–05\*



\*Total includes data for PPV/TPV/THV/RPV/RPBV holders.

**Table 15:** Major refugee group arrivals assisted under the IHSS by description, characteristics, settlement location, and numbers 2004–2005

Description	Group characteristics	Settlement location	Number of entrants
Ethiopian 304 entrants Arrived: July–December 2004	Long period in Abu Rakhm Refugee camp, Sudan High needs	Vic.	100
		WA	77
		Tas.	75
		Qld	52
Liberian 376 entrants Arrived: January 2005	Single refugee camp in Guinea (Laine) Mostly female heads of household High needs	NSW	100
		Vic.	97
		WA	80
		Qld	61
		SA	38
Burundian/Congolese 336 entrants Arrived: March 2005	From Tanzanian refugee camps High needs	NSW	74
		SA	64
		Qld	56
		Vic.	54
		WA	52
		Tas.	27
		NT	9
Liberian 375 entrants Arrived: April 2005	Single refugee camp in Guinea (Laine) Mostly female heads of household High needs	NSW	102
		Vic.	91
		WA	75
		SA	58
		Qld	49



## CARLA TONGUN (SUDAN)

Carla Tongun and her family are looking to a different future to what they would have had in their native country of Sudan.

Now living in Australia, three of Carla's children are studying at university, two are in their final year of high school, and one has a career in IT and marketing.

In Sudan her children would have spent most of their lives without a father. As a professional person he was seen as a threat to the Sudanese Government and imprisoned seven times between 1981 and 1998.

If they had stayed in Sudan they would have grown up in war with death an everyday reality.

"My children had to witness the shelling of their city, houses burning and dead bodies everywhere," she said.

Carla fled with her children to Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya, in 1991. However, camp conditions were almost as dangerous as those they left behind so they applied to resettle in Australia.

The Tongun family arrived in Adelaide in 2000. Their Australian sponsor welcomed them and took them to housing provided by the Lutheran Church of Australia. Soon after, DIMIA provided assistance so they could move into their own home.

Staff from the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in South Australia, funded by DIMIA to provide settlement assistance, gave the Tonguns information about local facilities and helped set up medical appointments, fill in forms for Centrelink, Medicare and other services, and furnish their home.

Three months later Carla started as a volunteer for the MRC, helping other

humanitarian entrants settle into Australian life. She also volunteered at the Women's Information Service Desk.

In 2003 Carla began working with the South Australian Government in the Child and Youth Health Service. As the African community consultant she organises health examinations, immunisations and home visits. Her knowledge of Arabic, Swahili and several other African dialects enables her to assist the community as a counsellor.

"There are different cultural norms in Australia, particularly around relationships between parents and children which can lead to instability within the community," Carla said. "Here children have so much independence. In the African context you must remain with your family and you have less freedom, until you're strong and self-supportive. It was difficult at first. My husband and I have worked hard to have an open dialogue with our children," she said.

The Tonguns also found it challenging to rebuild their community.

"Until the war in Sudan we had a good life and plans for our children. Then everything is taken away in the blink of an eye and you have to flee for your life," Carla said. "You go to a new country but you don't know where to, or how to, start. You leave behind those you know, your family and community. But the Government and service providers did so much to make our lives easier."

"I want to thank the Australian Government for supporting us and giving my children a new future. I look forward to when they finish their education and join the workforce, so they can give back to a country that has given us so much," Carla said.