

# Humanitarian Program

## Australia's Contribution to the System of International Protection

Australia is a committed participant in the system of international protection in which countries choose to share responsibility to protect and find orderly resolution for the plight of refugees.

A key element of this commitment is Australia's Humanitarian Program, which provides resettlement to persons overseas who are in the greatest need of this durable solution, as well as protection to persons who arrive in Australia and are in need of that protection.

The resettlement component of the program goes beyond any international obligations and reflects Australia's desire to assist persons around the world in greatest need of resettlement.

Australia is one of just ten countries operating a well established and successful resettlement program, and consistently ranks within the top three countries in terms of the number of persons resettled.

## History of the Humanitarian Program

Although Australia has a long history of resettling refugees and displaced persons, a regular and planned humanitarian component of the Migration Program did not commence until 1977-78.

The first Humanitarian Programs in the late 1970s and early 1980s were dominated by Indochinese, although there was also a significant East European component. Programs were large, with 21,917 persons arriving under the Humanitarian Program in 1981-82. Almost all were assisted refugees. The Global Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) was not introduced until late 1981.

By the second half of the 1980s, the Humanitarian Program had shrunk, averaging 11,000 to 12,000 per year. Although the program was still dominated by Indochinese, it was more diverse with over forty nationalities represented including significant Latin/Central American and Middle Eastern caseloads. SHP had become the largest category of the program.

In 1991, the Special Assistance Category (SAC) was introduced to assist specific groups of individuals with close links to Australia who, while subject to severe hardship, did not fit the traditional humanitarian categories. The SACs were all closed by 2001.

## Australia's Humanitarian Program

### Onshore Protection

The onshore component comprises two types of Protection Visas:

- Permanent Protection Visa (PPV) for people who arrive in Australia on a temporary visa, lodge an application for

**Fig. 2-21: Humanitarian Program Outcomes: Visas Granted 1995-96 to 2004-05**

Category	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05
Refugee	4,640	3,330	4,010	3,990	3,800	4,000	4,160	4,380 <sup>(f)</sup>	4,130	5,511
Special Humanitarian Program	3,500	2,580	4,640	4,350	3,050	3,120	4,260	7,280	7,670	6,585
Special Assistance Category	6,910	3,730	1,820	1,190	650	880	40	—	—	—
Onshore Humanitarian <sup>(a)</sup>	—	—	—	—	—	160	10	—	—	187 <sup>(1)</sup>
Onshore Refugees <sup>(b)</sup>	1,200	2,250	1,590	1,830	2,460	5,580	3,890	870	2,050 <sup>(g)</sup>	895 <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Total Grants<sup>(c)</sup></b>	<b>16,250<sup>(e)</sup></b>	<b>11,900</b>	<b>12,060</b>	<b>11,360</b>	<b>9,960<sup>(e)</sup></b>	<b>13,730</b>	<b>12,350</b>	<b>12,530</b>	<b>13,850</b>	<b>13,178</b>

(a) Persons granted permanent residence status on humanitarian grounds on the basis of applications lodged prior to December 1989, or granted Temporary Humanitarian Concerns (subclass 786) visas.

(b) Prior to 1996-97, Onshore Refugees were not counted against the Humanitarian Program.

(c) Note that figures have been rounded and thus totals may not be the exact sum of components.

(d) These totals reflect the decision to bring forward, into 1995-96, 2,000 places from the 1996-97 Program.

(e) In addition to this number, 5,900 Safe Haven visas were granted in 1999-00 comprising 4,000 grants to Kosovars offshore and 1,900 to East Timorese onshore.

(f) 498 places were brought forward from the 2003-04 program year to allow grant of refugee visas which had reached finalisation.

(g) Includes 1,228 visa granted to East Timorese under ministerial intervention powers.

(1) Includes 148 visas granted to East Timorese under ministerial intervention powers.

(2) Comprises 233 initial temporary protection visas and 662 permanent protection visas

Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

protection and are subsequently found to engage Australia's protection obligations; and

- Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) for people who arrive in Australia unlawfully, lodge applications for protection and are subsequently found to engage Australia's protection obligations.

### Offshore Resettlement

The offshore component has three categories:

- the Refugee category,
- the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP); and
- the Secondary Movement category.

The Refugee category assists people who are subject to persecution in their home country and have been identified in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as in need of resettlement.

The SHP assists people who have suffered substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights in their home country. The SHP enables the resettlement of persons in Australia who, while not refugees, are in humanitarian need. People applying under the SHP must demonstrate some connection with Australia. Their applications must be supported by a formal proposal from a permanent resident, or a citizen of Australia, or an organisation operating in Australia.

The Secondary Movement category operates for people who are subject to persecution or substantial discrimination in their home country, and who move beyond their country of first asylum to seek asylum in a country of their choice.

increase in the Refugee component from 4,000 to 6,000 places, making the Refugee component the largest since 1985-86.

The program increase in 2004-05 was the result of the significant decrease in unauthorised arrivals and the consequent reduction in onshore protection grants. This allowed the Government to re-invest in the offshore Humanitarian Program thereby re-focusing the program on those in the greatest relative need of resettlement.

The program will continue to be flexible, thus ensuring that Australia's contribution to humanitarian resettlement is maximised. This means that:

- where places in one program year are not used, those places can be rolled over into the following program year;
- places can also be moved between the offshore and onshore components of the program as required;
- visas issued to applicants but not used for entry to Australia may be re-allocated in the following program year to ensure that all places under the program are fully utilised, thus ensuring that no places under the program are wasted;
- where resettlement places in excess of those available in a program year are required, the Minister may bring forward places from future program years.

### Humanitarian Program Performance - 2004-05

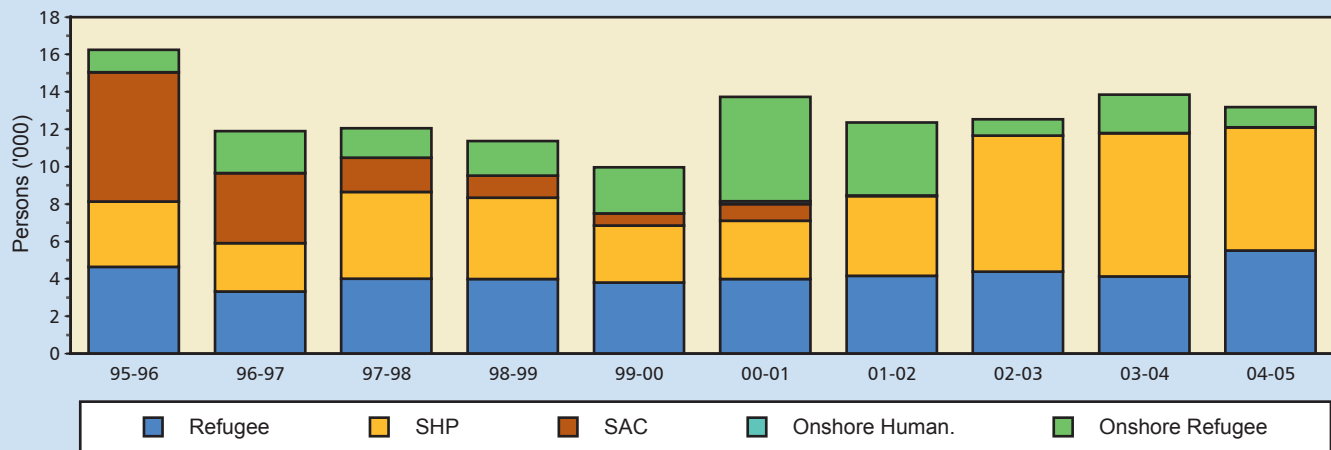
12,389 places were available for use in the 2004-05 program year. A total of 13,178 visas were granted by 30 June 2005. This is the second time in six years that there was no carry-over of unused places into the following year. Required places were bought forward from 2005-06. The 13,178 grants in 2004-05 represents the third highest number of grants under the Humanitarian Program in nine years and the Offshore component, with 12,096 grants, is the highest outcome over the same period.

The increased 2004-05 Humanitarian Program was fully delivered through program flexibility, allowing places to be brought forward

### Size of the Humanitarian Program

For a number of years the Humanitarian Program was maintained at 12,000 new places each year. In 2004-05 the program increased to 13,000 new places. The program expansion included a 50%

Fig. 2-22: Humanitarian Program Outcomes by Category update



Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

or carried over from one year to another. 13,000 new places were made available to the program in 2004-05. In addition, 349 places were re-credited from previous program years as a result of TPV departures and non-usage of offshore visa grants. 960 places were brought forward to the previous program year to meet demand, producing 12,389 available places for use in 2004-05. All 12,389 places were used and an additional 789 places were brought forward from 2005-06.

### Humanitarian Program 2005-06

In 2005-06, the size of the Humanitarian Program has been maintained at 13,000 new places comprising 6,000 places within the Refugee category, and 7,000 for Special Humanitarian Program and Onshore Protection places.

### Initiatives to enhance the delivery of the Humanitarian Program in 2005-06

Prior to 2004-05, the Humanitarian Program required proposers to meet the travel and medical costs of individuals entering under the SHP category, as well as providing post-arrival support. The Government implemented a number of initiatives during 2004-05 to alleviate some of the financial pressures faced by families and individuals. Initiatives include:

- Government funding of medical assessment costs for all entrants under the SHP category;
- Grant of \$2.5 million to the International Organization for Migration to help proposers meet SHP travel costs;
- Expansion of the cultural orientation program, which provided some 6000 people in 2004-05 with pre-departure information about their new life in Australia, at a cost of \$1 million.

In addition, onshore lodgement of SHP applications was extended to cover all applications previously lodged with DIMIA missions in Africa and the Middle East. These applications are now lodged in Sydney and Melbourne respectively.

**Fig. 2-23: Humanitarian Program Outcomes 2004-05**

Offshore	Refugee	5,511
	SHP	6,585
	Subtotal	12,096
Onshore	TPV	233
	PPV	662
	THCV <sup>1</sup>	17
	Onshore SHP <sup>2</sup>	170
	Subtotal	1,082
<b>Program Total</b>		<b>13,178</b>

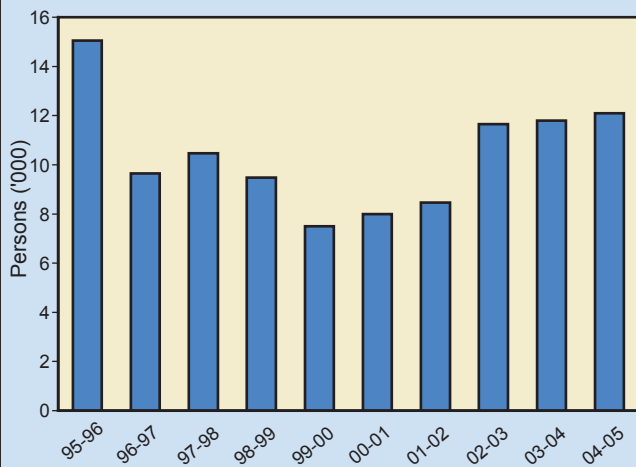
<sup>1</sup> Temporary Humanitarian Concern visas granted to Safe Haven visa holders who required medical treatment in Australia.

<sup>2</sup> Includes 148 visas granted to East Timorese under ministerial intervention powers.

Source Data: MPMS and IMIRS

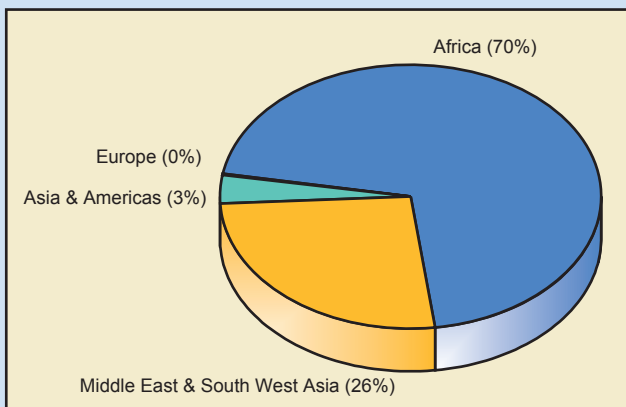
# Humanitarian Program (Offshore)

**Fig. 2-24: Offshore Humanitarian Visa Grants**



Source Data: MPMS

**Fig. 2-25: Offshore Humanitarian Visa Grants by Region**



Source Data: MPMS

**Fig. 2-26: Offshore Humanitarian Visa Grants by Country of Birth 2004-05**

Sudan	5,220
Iraq	1,589
Afghanistan	1,291
Liberia	868
Sierra Leone	751
Burundi	660
Myanmar/Burma	313
Congo (including the DCR)	300
Iran	278
Somalia	201
Other	625
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,096</b>

Source Data: MPMS

## Offshore Humanitarian Program Performance

In 2004-05, 12,096 resettlement visas were granted offshore comprising:

- 5,511 Refugee visas, (including 155 persons resettled from the offshore processing centre in Nauru); and
- 6,585 SHP visas.

The 2004-05 outcome represents the highest level of resettlement visas granted offshore since 1995-96.

## Source Regions

In line with regional priorities as recommended by the UNHCR, priority was given to resettlement of people from Africa, the Middle East and South West Asia.

2004-05 visa grants by source regions are as follows:

- Africa – 70.15 per cent of total offshore grants (a small decrease on the 2003-04 outcome);
- Middle East and South West Asia – 26.24 per cent of total offshore grants (an increase of 2 percent of the total offshore program in comparison with 2003-04);
- Europe – 0.17 per cent of total offshore grants (a reduction of 3 per cent of the total offshore program in comparison with 2003-04);
- Asia and America – 3.44 per cent of total offshore grants.

## Processing Times

Processing times in 2004-05 remained steady, with 75% of applications being finalised within 42 weeks. In 2003-04, it took 40 weeks to finalise 75% of all applications. The small rise in finalisation times was due to posts finalising more cases in 2004-05, including old outstanding cases.

The trend in the reduction of visa grant times also continued during 2004-05 with 75% of offshore visa grants being processed in 52 weeks. In 2003-04, it took 57 weeks to grant 75% of offshore visas.

The number of applications finalised during 2004-05 also increased to 114,195 in comparison to 67,081 finalised during 2003-04.

# Humanitarian Program (Onshore)

## Onshore Humanitarian Program Performance

There were 8,278 protection visa finalisation decisions in 2004-05 and a total of 4,601 protection visas granted in the year following primary review or ministerial intervention decision. These figures represent a significant increase over the number of protection visa finalisations and protection visa grants in 2003-04. In that year there were 6,324 protection visa finalisations and a total of 1,923 protection visa grants. The increase in finalisations and grants in 2004-05 reflects a significant increase in the rate of further protection visa decision-making related to applicants from countries which historically have had high protection visa approval rates. This has more than offset the impact of a continuing decline in the application rate for initial protection visa applications which have historically had lower protection visa approval rates. In 2004-05 there were 3,105 initial protection visa applications lodged, down from 3,567 in 2003-04.

In 2004-05, 922 of the protection visas granted resulted from initial applications and 3,679 resulted from applications for further protection. Of the total of 4,601 protection visas granted in the year, 895 were counted as part of the Humanitarian Program. The remainder were grants of further protection to Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) holders and offshore Temporary Humanitarian Visa (THV) holders who have already been counted as part of the Humanitarian Program, and grants to Australian born children of protection visa holders.

Of the 4,601 protection visas granted in 2004-05, over 93 percent were permanent protection visas. This reflects the absence of unauthorised boat arrivals during 2004-05 and that almost all further protection visas granted to temporary protection visa holders were permanent protection visas.

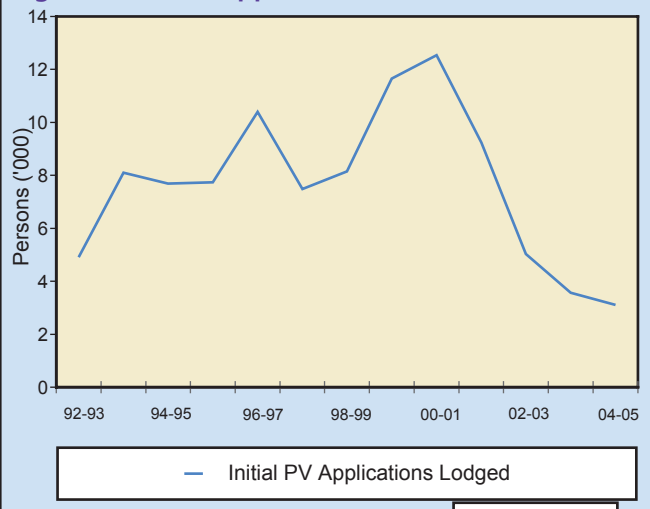
## Processing Times

The department has continued to give attention to streamlining onshore protection processing, strengthening arrangements for decision maker training, country information research and character checking to ensure speedy and robust decision-making. Particular focus was given throughout the year to working with other agencies to reduce waiting times for character and other checks beyond DIMIA's control.

In 2004-05, the department finalised over 79 per cent of initial protection visa applications from applicants not in detention within 90 days of lodgement, excluding periods where there were factors outside DIMIA's control which prevent finalisation.

The target for protection visa applications from people in detention is for 60 per cent of applications to be finalised within 42 days

Fig. 2-27: Initial Applications for Protection Visas



Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 2-28: Initial Protection Visa Applications by Citizenship 2004-05

PRC	883
Sri Lanka	271
India	164
Malaysia	150
Indonesia	129
Bangladesh	99
Afghanistan	98
Iran	98
Philippines	98
Korea, Republic of	89
Other	1,026
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,105</b>

Source Data: IMIRS

Fig. 2-29: Initial Protection Visa Grants by Citizenship 2004-05

PRC	115
Iran	107
Afghanistan	99
Iraq	55
Sri Lanka	40
Bangladesh	35
Zimbabwe	34
Pakistan	29
Indonesia	27
Egypt	26
Other	355
<b>Total</b>	<b>922</b>

Source Data: IMIRS

of lodgement, excluding periods where there are factors outside DIMIA's control which prevent finalisation. DIMIA performed significantly better than this target in 2004-05, finalising some 84 per cent of these applications within 42 days.

On 17 June 2005, the Prime Minister announced that the department will complete all primary assessments of applications for permanent protection visas from the existing case load of Temporary Protection Visa holders by 31 October 2005. He also announced that in future all primary protection visa decisions taken by the department will need to occur within three months of application. Cases where these time limits are not met will be the subject of periodic reports to Parliament, which will include information on the reasons why applications have not been finalised within the required timeframe. A range of streamlining arrangements is being implemented to deliver the commitments on protection visa processing timelines.

## New Measures for TPV and THV Holders

On 27 August 2004 the Government introduced measures that apply to holders of the following Temporary Protection Visas and Temporary Humanitarian Visas in the humanitarian program:

- Secondary Movement Offshore Entry (Temporary)
- Secondary Movement Relocation (Temporary)
- Temporary Protection Visa

These measures include three main elements:

- The introduction of a 'Return Pending' visa to provide a further 18 months stay for those who are found to be no longer owed protection;
- Allowing those TPV and THV holders who were in Australia before 27 August 2004 to apply for mainstream migration visas; and
- Access to a reintegration assistance package to assist those who wish to voluntarily return to their home country.