

## Chapter 7

### Settlement and cultural diversity

- In 2007-08, 9556 humanitarian entrants received specialised support to assist them to settle in Australia.
- The Adult Migrant English Program services were provided to 50 432 migrants in 2007-08.
- In 2007-08, 126 214 free telephone and on-site interpreting services were provided.
- Australians speak over 300 languages including Indigenous languages and identify with more than 200 ancestries and practise over 100 religions.

# Settlement and cultural diversity

## Settlement Grants Program (SGP)

The SGP funds settlement services that help eligible clients become self-reliant and participate equitably in Australian society as soon as possible after arrival. The SGP commenced on 1 July 2006 and combined funding from the Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS) and Migrant Resource Centre/Migrant Service Agency (MRC/MSA) core funding.

The SGP funds projects that promote:

- Orientation to Australia
- Developing Communities
- Integration (inclusion and participation).

Orientation projects aim to promote self-reliance in individuals and families through the development of Australian life skills. Orientation may take the form of providing information or referrals to appropriate agencies and casework with individuals and families. Orientation services focus on practical approaches to learning that recognise the experiences and capacities of clients.

Developing Communities projects aim to assist newly arrived migrant and humanitarian communities to identify common goals and interests, develop a shared purpose and promote a sense of identity and belonging.

Integration projects aim to promote inclusion and participation in broader Australian society by encouraging partnership initiatives with mainstream community and government organisations. This is a two-way process—assisting new arrivals to interact with and understand the broader community and encouraging the broader community to be responsive to new arrivals.

SGP services are available to permanent residents who have arrived in the last five years as:

- humanitarian entrants
- family stream entrants with low English proficiency
- dependants of skilled migrants with low English proficiency who have settled in rural and regional areas.

Funding priorities for the SGP are determined through an annual assessment of settlement needs. This approach ensures that the services funded through the SGP are targeted toward those communities and locations in greatest need, and that these services are responsive to changing settlement patterns.

In 2007-08, 332 projects were funded, totalling \$32 million.

## Settlement information

Information to assist new arrivals settle in Australia is provided through DIAC's Citizenship and Living in Australia website.

See: <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia>

The information on the website is aimed at:

- prospective migrants
- newly-arrived migrants and their sponsors
- service providers
- community organisations
- Australian citizens and residents seeking citizenship
- researchers.

Topics that can be accessed include:

- Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)
- Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)
- Settlement Grants Program (SGP)
- Settlement Database (with a Settlement Reporting Facility)
- A Diverse Australia
- National Action Plan
- Australian Citizenship website.

The Australian Citizenship website is maintained by the Citizenship Branch of the department.

See: <http://www.citizenship.gov.au>

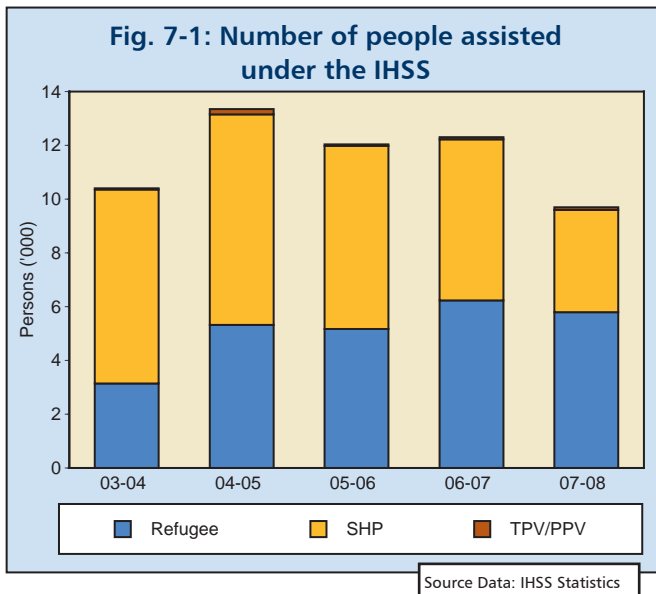
In addition, the Citizenship and Living in Australia website provides access to download the "Beginning a Life in Australia" booklets. These booklets provide national, state/territory and local settlement information for prospective and newly-arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants as well as sponsors and service providers.

Each state and territory has its own version of the booklet, available in English and 37 community languages.

See: <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/settle-in-australia/beginning-life>

Comprehensive demographic reports on new arrivals for each state and territory, as well as Community Profiles on key humanitarian entrant communities, are also available on the department's website.

See: <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning>

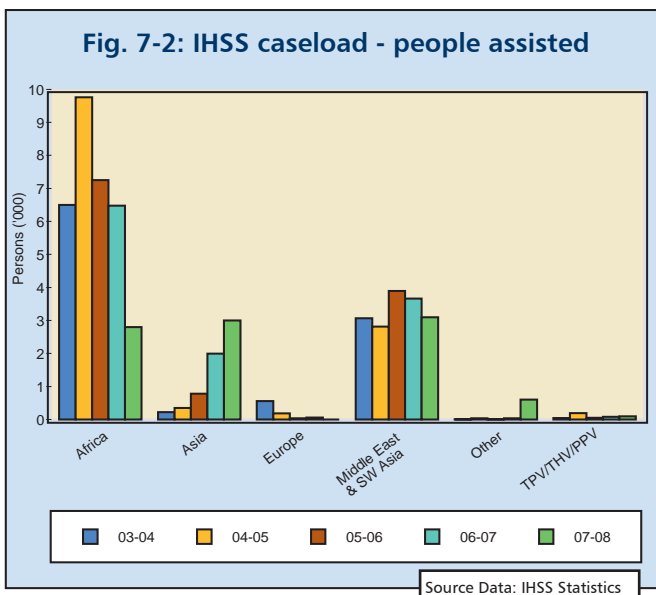


Interested persons and organisations are able to access up-to-date figures on migrant and refugee arrivals via the online Settlement Reporting Facility, which utilises the Settlement Database.

See: <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/settlement-reporting-facility>.

The database is available free of charge and allows people to prepare their own reports on the number of arrivals to Australia according to selected criteria including:

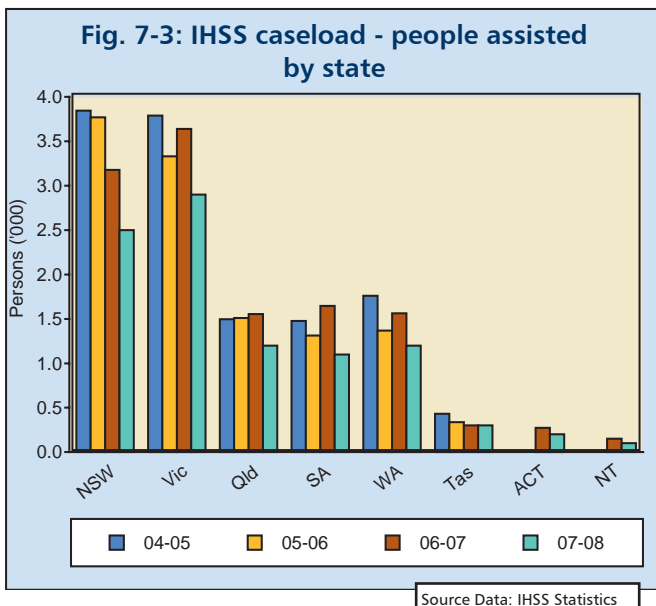
- migration category
- country of birth
- language
- English proficiency
- religion
- gender
- settlement location.



## Specialised settlement support for humanitarian entrants

The Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) provides initial, intensive, on arrival settlement support to refugees and Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) entrants. The IHSS aims to help these humanitarian entrants achieve self-sufficiency as soon as possible by providing them with specialised services on a needs basis. Services provided under the IHSS are:

- Case Coordination, Information and Referrals, which includes a case coordination plan based on an initial needs assessment, information about, and referral to, other service providers and mainstream agencies, and help for proposers to fulfil their role of assisting SHP entrants
- On Arrival Reception and Assistance, which includes meeting eligible entrants on arrival, taking them to accommodation, providing initial orientation and meeting any emergency needs for medical attention or clothing and footwear
- Accommodation Services, which helps entrants to find appropriate and affordable accommodation and provides them with basic household goods to start establishing their own household in Australia and
- Short Term Torture and Trauma Counselling Services, which provides an assessment of needs, a case plan, referral for torture and trauma counselling and raises awareness among other health care providers of health issues arising from torture and trauma experiences.



IHSS services are delivered by service providers contracted to the department. Volunteer groups also work with service providers to support entrants and assist them to settle into the local community.

The intensive assistance provided under the IHSS is intended for the initial settlement period, which, in most cases, is about six months. Once humanitarian entrants exit the IHSS, they are referred to general settlement services provided by organisations funded under the SGP.

In 2007-08, 9556 people were assisted under the IHSS. Of these, 5752 were Refugee entrants and 3804 were SHP entrants. A further 126 Temporary Protection Visa/Temporary Humanitarian Visa/Permanent Protection Visa holders also received assistance under the IHSS.

The top five nationalities assisted under IHSS in 2007-08 by country were Myanmar (25 per cent), Iraq (18 per cent), Afghanistan (12 per cent), Sudan (11 per cent) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (5 per cent). The nationality of a person refers to the citizenship they hold. A person's nationality might be, but is not necessarily, the same as their country of birth.

Of the 9556 people assisted under the IHSS, 49.8 per cent were female and 50.2 per cent were male and of those assisted, 49.9 per cent were under the age of 18 years. The proportion of large families (five or over) has decreased from 32.0 per cent in 2006-07 to 29.9 per cent in 2007-08, while in the same period, the proportion of singles has increased by 2 per cent to 31.1 per cent.

## Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHMs)

The Australian Government provides specialised support for UHMs. A UHM is a person who has been granted a visa under the Humanitarian Program, is under the age of 18 years and does not have a parent to care for them in Australia.

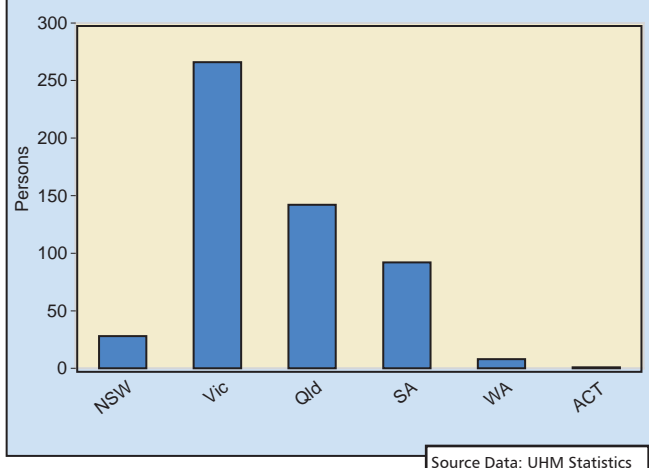
As at 30 June 2008 there were 537 UHMs in the UHM Program, under which state welfare authorities provide welfare supervision and support through cost sharing agreements between the Commonwealth and the states.

## Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

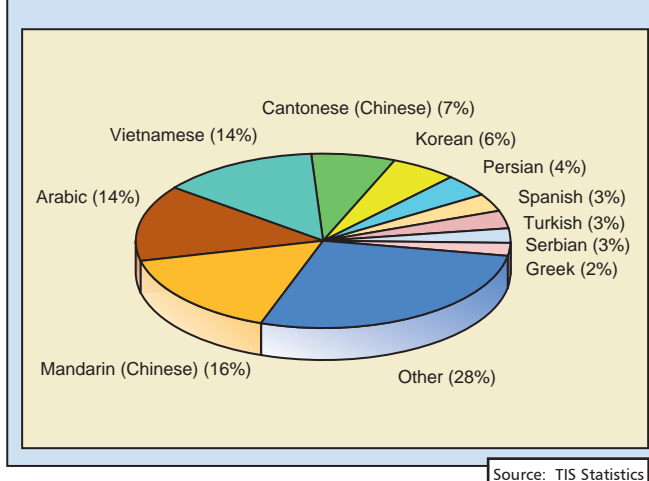
The AMEP is a national settlement program that provides basic English language tuition to eligible adult migrants and humanitarian entrants. Eligible migrants are entitled to tuition of up to 510 hours, or until they reach functional English, whichever comes first. Humanitarian entrants with difficult pre-migration experiences such as torture, trauma or limited formal schooling, may be eligible for additional hours under the Special Preparatory Program.

Clients have access to tuition in a variety of delivery methods, including classroom learning, distance education and the home tutor scheme. Classes are provided at various times during the day, evenings and on weekends, with the option of full and part-time learning also offered.

**Fig. 7-4: Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors program in Australia at 30 June 2008**



**Fig. 7-5: Main languages used by interpreters (on site and phone) 2007-08**



AMEP services were provided to 50 432 clients from 192 countries in 2007-08. The client group consisted of 68 per cent women and 32 per cent men, 77 per cent were aged between 20 and 44. Just under 21 per cent of all clients indicated they had seven years or less of formal education. The top three languages spoken were Mandarin (16 per cent), Arabic (12 per cent) and Vietnamese (8 per cent).

In 2007-08, 15 per cent of clients were dependents of skilled migrant entrants, 56 per cent family entrants and 28 per cent humanitarian entrants.

## Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)

The Australian Government provides an interpreting service (TIS National) for people who do not speak English and for the English speakers who need to communicate with them. TIS National has access to over 1300 contracted interpreters across Australia, speaking more than 120 languages and dialects.

TIS National is accessible from anywhere in Australia, and is available to any person or organisation requiring interpreting services. Telephone interpreting is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phoning 131 450.

The Australian Government also funds TIS National to provide free translating and interpreting services to approved individuals and community organisations. Free interpreting services are provided to enable communication between non-English speaking migrants and humanitarian entrants who are Australian citizens or permanent residents, and the following approved individuals and organisations:

- non-profit, non-government community-based organisations for case work and settlement-related services where the organisation does not receive government funding to provide these services
- Members of Parliament for constituency purposes
- local government authorities for communication with non-English speaking residents regarding goods and services provided by local government
- trade unions for members' enquiries
- Emergency Management Australia

The Doctors Priority Line gives medical practitioners in private practice providing Medicare-rebatable services access to an interpreter 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for the cost of a local call.

The Australian Government also provides access to free translations of settlement-related personal documents to permanent residents and some temporary visa holders within their first two years of arrival in Australia or grant of permanent residence. Returning Australian citizens may also be eligible for free translation service within two years of returning to Australia to settle permanently.

In 2007-08, a pilot extension of free interpreting services to pharmacies was conducted, providing 331 participating pharmacies with unlimited access to telephone interpreting services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Following the conclusion of the pilot, participating pharmacies were consulted on their usage and the value of the service to inform the evaluation of the pilot. Overall, pharmacies perceived that client satisfaction with the service was high and the majority of pharmacies who used the service found it to be a valuable tool when communicating with non-English speakers. Access to free interpreting services for participating pharmacies will continue until the evaluation is concluded.

In 2007-08, 126 214 free telephone and on-site interpreting services were provided. The total number of services was slightly higher than that provided in 2006-07 and also higher than estimated demand.

In 2007-08 a total of 7855 documents were translated under the free translation service. This was an increase from 7184 in 2006-07, but was 8 per cent below the 2007-08 target of 8500.

The high-demand languages for on-site and telephone interpreting were Mandarin (Chinese), Arabic, Vietnamese, Cantonese (Chinese), Persian, Korean, Kirundi (Birundi language), Turkish, Dinka (Sudanese language) and Spanish.

The high-demand languages for translation were Arabic, Mandarin (Chinese), Russian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Chinese, Farsi, Indonesian, German and Ukrainian.

Interpreters in new and emerging languages are critical to recent arrivals accessing services in Australia. Due to the changing nature of the Humanitarian Program, DIAC is continually encouraging and recruiting interpreters in these languages. Recruitment activity over the course of the 2007-08 financial year resulted in 159 interpreters being added to the TIS National interpreter panel. The new interpreters collectively speak 85 different languages and dialects. Of these interpreters, 67 speak 52 different new and emerging community languages.

In 2008 the Australian Government provided funding to the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) to deliver the New Interpreters Project, which will target potential interpreters who speak new and emerging languages in metropolitan areas, and those who speak any language with a high demand and a shortage of available qualified interpreters in rural and regional areas. The project will subsidise NAATI preparatory workshops, NAATI application fees, NAATI Testing/Assessment Fees and associated English Language Testing fees in an effort to increase the number of interpreters in languages where there are shortages.

### Employment Pathways and Traineeships in English and Work Readiness Programs

The Government committed \$49.2 million over four years in the 2008-09 Budget to strengthen measures to help migrants and humanitarian entrants gain the language skills they need to obtain employment. In the Employment Pathways Program, clients learn English and gain familiarity with and experience of Australian workplace culture and practices. The Traineeships in English and the Work Readiness Program assists new arrivals to gain English language skills and supports the transition into a professional field or vocational training. These programs create an ongoing pathway to assist migrants to participate in the Australian workforce.

## Australia's cultural diversity

The government is committed to an immigration policy which meets Australia's economic and social needs, and which does not discriminate on the grounds of ethnicity, political views, culture, language or religion. Diversity will remain a feature of our society.

Today, some 45 per cent of all Australians were born overseas or have at least one parent who was born overseas. People from more than 200 countries make up the Australian community. We speak about 300 languages, including indigenous languages, and practise a wide variety of religions.

We benefit enormously from our diverse people, drawn from a wide variety of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. The government is committed to programs that support our progress as an inclusive and cohesive multicultural society.

### Multicultural policy framework

A new multicultural policy is currently being considered by the government, including advisory arrangements. It is reviewing its multicultural programs to ensure they are effective in supporting our progress as a prosperous, inclusive and cohesive nation.

### Living in Harmony

The Living in Harmony program was established in 1998. It is primarily a community-based educational initiative which seeks to strengthen community relations in Australia, promote mutual respect and participation and engage the whole community in fostering a shared sense of belonging.

Through a range of funding initiatives, the program establishes partnerships with educational institutions, community groups, peak bodies and national organisations to work together to address issues of cultural, racial and religious intolerance on a regional or national scale.

Harmony Day, held every year on 21 March, is the public face of the Living in Harmony program and it seeks to celebrate the achievements and contributions made by all Australians to the community.

The Government is currently reviewing the Living in Harmony program to improve the way in which the program brings all Australians together in a positive way that promotes the benefits of our nation's cultural diversity. The review will also seek to broaden the reach of the program, to direct funding more effectively to areas of need and to promote a sense of belonging for all Australians.

## National Action Plan

The National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security is a whole-of-government program involving Federal, State and Territory Governments. It addresses issues of concern to all Australians, including those under pressure as a result of responses to global terrorism.

The National Action Plan builds community resilience and encourages participation in the wider community through projects focusing on education, employment, integrating communities and understanding of and participation in national security measures. Through various initiatives, it also attempts to relieve some the social, cultural and political pressures on some of those Muslim Australians who feel marginalised.

### Community Liaison Officers

Through the Community Liaison Officer network, the government maintains contact with over 6000 community organisations and individuals. Community Liaison Officers, based in all state and territory offices of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, support ministerial and departmental engagement with Australia's ethnic communities and provide advice to government on community issues. They also support communities by connecting them with services at all levels of government.

When a crisis occurs in Australia or overseas, whether because of a domestic or overseas incident, the network supports the government and communities by responding promptly to provide a two-way flow of information and advice. Community liaison activities support multicultural policy and implementation, and promote national unity and social cohesion.

### Access and Equity

Under the Access and Equity strategy, government departments are encouraged to meet the needs of Australians, irrespective of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The strategy promotes fairness and responsiveness in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of government services in a culturally diverse society.