



Australian Housing
and Urban Research Institute

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**Australian Parliament
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Submission No. 84**

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Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
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By email: jscm@reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Hearn

Thank you for your letter to our Chairman, Mr Rod Fehring, regarding the Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia. It is very pleasing to learn that the Joint Standing Committee on Migration has commenced an inquiry into this important issue.

As you may be aware, the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) is a not-for-profit independent network organisation that funds, conducts, disseminates and tailors high quality research on housing, homelessness and cities. Our work informs the policies and practices of governments, industry and the community sector, and stimulates debate in the broader Australian community.

The AHURI research project *Housing need and provision for recently arrived refugees in Australia* resulted in some findings that we believe will be of interest to the Committee.

Results were based on an analysis of 434 interviews with refugees in Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane during 2002–2003. The survey was structured to report on the housing experiences and needs both of Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) arrivals into Australia and refugee immigrants who came to Australia as the holders of a Permanent Protection Visa (PPV). The research specifically addressed the accommodation of TPV holders – a relatively new group of arrivals. It addressed six questions that are important for policy development because they address critical issues relating to the level of housing need amongst refugees; the types of assistance used and the duration and cost of assistance provided by government and non-government service providers. Please see attached a copy of the *AHURI Research and Policy Bulletin* from this project. You can also find a copy of the Final Report from the project at <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/projects/p40048>. I am also attaching some general information about AHURI.

Key findings from the research, which was undertaken from Professor Andrew Beer and his colleagues from the AHURI Southern Research Centre, were as follows:

- Refugees (Permanent Protection Visa and Temporary Protection Visa holders) establish themselves in the housing market following a number of moves in the first year of settlement. Support provided by friends, family and community members, as well as by government, is important in the settlement process.
- There are different housing pathways for Permanent Protection Visa (PPV) and Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) holders. PPV holders are typically sponsored into and remain in the private rental market, typically moving three times within the first year. TPV holders are slightly more mobile, moving four times within 12 months of release from detention. They typically spend their first night post detention in a hotel, motel or backpacker hostel, with subsequent moves into the private rental sector, and stay with friends, relatives or community members.
- Based on the conventional definitions of loneliness applied in Australia, at least one-third of respondents have been homeless at some stage since their arrival in Australia – primarily due to the temporary and transitory nature of their accommodation. But this differs from the perception of respondents, with few believing that they had experienced homelessness, most probably due to the fact that they had not been 'sleeping rough'.
- Support provided by friends, family and community members is important in the settlement process, particularly for those refugees sponsored by family members (such as special humanitarian program entrants). Government assistance will be most effective when targeted to locations and communities where PPV and TPV holders are settling with their friends, family and community supports. This would complement the role of government agencies, such as the Department of Immigration and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA), Centrelink and State Housing Authorities (SHAs), in finding initial accommodation.

I do hope this information will contribute to the Committee's inquiry. If you would like any further information, either regarding this piece of research or AHURI in general, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Dr Ian Winter
Executive Director

cc: Rod Fehring, Chairman, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute