



Australia's settlement services for migrants and refugees

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Executive summary

- Australia's settlement services for refugees and migrants have evolved over the last 60 years from the provision of basic on-arrival accommodation and assistance, to more intensive support programs targeted at meeting the specific needs of humanitarian entrants.
- In recent years there has been an increased focus on how settlement and related services can contribute to community harmony and social cohesion.
- The current settlement services offered by the federal government include integrated support for humanitarian entrants, translating services, English language classes, and grants-based funding for projects to promote social cohesion and integration of migrant groups.
- There has been a recent focus in meeting the specific needs of humanitarian entrants from Africa, following increased community concern relating to the successful integration of these groups.
- An issue for the future will be how settlement and related services can be used to meet the needs of the large numbers of temporary migrants now entering Australia.
- Ensuring that temporary migrants settle well in Australia for the duration of their stay will help to alleviate concerns relating to temporary migration and social disharmony, and will allow Australia to gain the maximum economic and social benefit from temporary migrant worker programs.

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Introduction

Australia's first federal Department of Immigration was established in 1945. Since then, around 6.5 million migrants, including over 700 000 refugees and people in humanitarian need, have settled in the country. Source countries have shifted from the United Kingdom to Northern Europe, to Southern Europe, to the Middle East and Asia. Today, 24 per cent of Australia's population is overseas-born, and 43 per cent is either born overseas or has at least one parent born overseas.¹ Australians identify with more than 200 ancestries, speak over 300 languages, and practise more than 100 religions.²

Settlement services are intended to assist new migrants to participate as soon and as fully as possible in Australia's economy and society. Settlement services and programs have been provided by the Commonwealth government since the beginning of Australia's post-World War II migration program. They have expanded and evolved over the last 60 years as the population has grown increasingly diverse, and within over-arching policy frameworks that have developed from assimilation, through integration, to multiculturalism.

Australia's current settlement services comprise a range of programs such as accommodation and health services, English language tuition and interpreting services. Over the last 10 years, the bulk of permanent migrants have been skilled and English-speaking, and settlement services have increasingly focussed on refugees and humanitarian entrants. Current trends in migration to Australia show a significant increase in the numbers of temporary migrants entering Australia. Some eventually settle in Australia permanently, some may stay for anywhere from a few months to many years and then return home. Some are highly skilled, others, with the imminent introduction of a seasonal migrant worker program, will be unskilled. A challenge for the future lies in considering how settlement and related services can meet the needs of this diverse group.

This research paper provides an overview of settlement services provided by the federal government for migrants and humanitarian entrants. It examines the development of settlement services from the post-war years through to the present time. The paper argues that there is a need for further development of such services to encompass the needs of the growing numbers of temporary migrants entering Australia. It reviews and updates the contents of [Australia's settlement services for refugees and migrants](#), a Parliamentary Library publication from 2006.

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1. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Fact Sheet 2: Key facts in Immigration*, online only, 2008, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/02key.htm>, accessed on 16 February 2009.
 2. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Population Flows: Immigration Aspects 2006–07*, Canberra, 2008, p. 95, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/popflows2006-7/ch7pt01.pdf>, accessed on 16 February 2009.

History

In 1945, the government of the day established Australia's first Department of Immigration in order to manage the post-war entry of migrants and displaced persons. Settlement services began to be developed from the outset. The first chapter of the Department of Immigration's 2003 *Report on the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants* contains a history of the development of Australia's settlement services.³ Some of the background described in this report is outlined below.

In the early post-war period, migrants and refugees were expected to assimilate and blend into the population as quickly as possible. Assimilation policies were based on an assumption that this would not be difficult for new arrivals. Settlement assistance was limited to the provision of migrant hostels and some language tuition.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the phrase 'goals of assimilation' was replaced by 'goals of integration', in recognition of the fact that adjusting to a new way of life might not be easy for everyone and that new arrivals may not want to lose their cultural identity. The Department of Immigration expanded language and other settlement services as a result. The Child Migrant Education Program, the Translating and Interpreting Service and the Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications were all established in these years.

In 1977 the Fraser Government commissioned a *Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants* (the 'Galbally review').⁴ Following the release of the report in 1978 there was another shift in the policy framework for managing cultural and linguistic diversity, towards multiculturalism, as recommended in the review. Multiculturalism continued to be the defining objective underpinning the provision of settlement services for migrants and refugees throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Existing services (such as English language teaching, on-arrival accommodation and orientation assistance, interpreting and translating services, and assistance with overseas qualifications recognition) were expanded, and new programs and services were introduced (including ethnic radio and the SBS, Migrant Resource Centres and grants to ethnic community organisations). The National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia adopted by the Hawke government in 1989 officially defined

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3. Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, *Report on the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants*, Canberra, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra, May 2003, <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-policy/review-settlement-services.htm>, accessed on 4 March 2009. Further historical background can be found in James Jupp, *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.
 4. Frank Galbally, *Migrant Services and Programs: Report of the Review of Post-arrival Programs and Services for Migrants*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, May 1978.

multiculturalism and emphasised the need to both further assist new migrants to settle in the country and simultaneously respect cultural diversity.⁵

Since the 1990s, while there has been a continued broad focus on multiculturalism, specific settlement services have been more closely targeted at high needs groups among new arrivals, generally within their first five years of settlement. Today, designated settlement services are available only to permanent residents who have arrived in the last five years as humanitarian entrants or as family stream migrants with low English proficiency, and dependants of skilled migrants located in a rural or regional area with low English proficiency. The Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) was introduced in 2000 to provide intensive on-arrival assistance for humanitarian entrants. The IHSS, discussed in more detail below, continues to be the primary vehicle for delivering settlement assistance to humanitarian entrants today.

Recent years have also seen a renewed focus on integration and social cohesion in the wake of incidents which have raised concerns over public acceptance of some migrant groups.⁶ This has been occurring amid increased concerns relating to national security and links to immigration. Government policies and programs are now focussing on attempts to promote 'Australian values', and foster cohesion and tolerance amongst different cultural and ethnic groups. Since late 2006 most visa applicants to Australia, both permanent and temporary, have been required to sign an Australian Values Statement, acknowledging that they will respect Australian values and obey the laws of Australia during their stay. The National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security was developed in 2005–06 to 'reinforce social cohesion, harmony and support the national security imperative in Australia by addressing extremism, the promotion of violence and intolerance, in response to

5. Australian Office of Multicultural Affairs, *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1989, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/agenda/agenda89/toc.htm>, accessed on 4 March 2009.

6. For example, there have been reported attacks and robberies targeting Indian migrants, particularly students, in parts of Melbourne. See J. Topsfield, 'Indians told to keep low profile', *The Age*, 19 February 2009, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressclp%2FPDTS6%22>, accessed on 23 March 2009.

The Cronulla riots of 2005 also demonstrate rising racial tensions targeted at particular migrant and ethnic groups. See J. Porter and J. Rowbotham, 'Howard admits racial tension inflamed riots', *The Australian*, 21 December 2005, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressclp%2FOVBI6%22>, accessed on 23 March 2009.

Also see the discussion of refugees from Africa in this paper, below.

the increased threat of global religious and political terrorism'.⁷ In this context, settlement and related services are intended to not only assist new arrivals to participate in Australian society as quickly as possible, but also to assist them to integrate as peacefully and harmoniously as possible.

Review of Settlement Services

In August 2002, the Hon. Gary Hardgrave MP, the then Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, announced a Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants. The resulting *Report on the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants* was released in May 2003.⁸

The review outlined the history of immigration to Australia since 1945 and the resulting demographic changes, and compared government policies with those of other countries with formal migration and humanitarian resettlement programs, such as Canada, New Zealand and the USA. It is worth noting that currently only about 14 countries participate in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) resettlement program and accept quotas of refugees on an annual basis. In 2007, of the main countries which resettled refugees through the UNHCR, the USA accounted for 64 per cent, Canada 15 per cent, Australia 13 per cent, Sweden 2 per cent, Norway 1 per cent, and New Zealand 1 per cent.⁹ The latest summary of Australia's humanitarian resettlement policies is outlined in the March 2007 revision of the Australia chapter of the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook.¹⁰

The report also discussed cultural diversity and policy implications and outlined some of the difficulties faced by settlers and their different settlement experiences. The Review found that Australia's settlement services are advanced by world standards, but also identified some areas where improvements could be made including a need for better coordination between state and commonwealth service providers, and less duplication of services. The Department

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7. Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, *A National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security*, 2006, <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-diverse-australia/national-action-plan/index.htm>, accessed on 4 March 2009.
 8. Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, op. cit.
 9. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *2007 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons*, Geneva, June 2008, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/STATISTICS/4852366f2.pdf>, accessed on 4 March 2009.
 10. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Resettlement Handbook*, Geneva, November 2004, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/protect?id=3d4545984>, accessed on 4 March 2009.

of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) states that most of the report's 61 recommendations have been implemented and the remainder are being progressed.¹¹

Current programs and services for newly-arrived migrants

Any migrant to Australia has access to the vast array of services available to all Australian citizens and permanent residents provided by governments, community organisations and the private sector, to address a number of their settlement needs.¹² For example, recent arrivals can access the services provided by Job Network organisations to help them find employment and use real estate agents to help them find accommodation.¹³ Specific settlement programs for migrants and refugees, funded and coordinated through DIAC, are outlined below. It is important to note that most migrants to Australia are not eligible for all the settlement services on offer. The bulk of settlement services are targeted at humanitarian entrants and refugees, who make up only a small proportion of the total number of migrants coming to Australia each year. Table 1 shows the numbers of migrants and refugees coming to Australia over the last five years, by major visa category. Only those in the humanitarian category are eligible for the full array of settlement services on offer. Most family and skilled stream migrants may not access the majority of the settlement services described below, or may access them on a user-pays basis only.

Table 1: Migrants by major visa category 2004–05 to 2007–08

Category	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Humanitarian	13 178	14 144	13 017	13 014
Family	41 740	45 290	50 080	49 870
Skilled	77 880	97 340	97 920	108 540
Temporary Resident ^a	198 273	227 856	265 279	Not available

a. The Temporary Resident category of visas includes those in the skilled worker, social and cultural, and international relations stream, but not short-term visitors and students. See *DIAC Fact Sheet 47: Temporary Residence in Australia* (http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/47temporary_residence.htm).

Source: Compiled from data published on the DIAC web site (www.immi.gov.au).

11. Department of Immigration and Citizenship web site, <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-policy/review-settlement-services.htm>, accessed on 4 March 2009.
12. Although there are some exceptions—for example, newly arrived migrants, excluding humanitarian entrants, must wait two years before accessing most Centrelink benefits.
13. There are also numerous community and not-for-profit groups which provide assistance to newly-arrived migrants, particularly humanitarian entrants. Many receive Federal Government funding, but many are also funded through private donations and other sources. Consideration of the programs offered by these organisations is outside the scope of this paper.

Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy

The IHSS provides initial, intensive settlement support to newly-arrived entrants under the humanitarian program. IHSS service providers assess entrants to identify settlement needs, and deliver services to meet these needs in a coordinated way. IHSS services are generally provided for around six months, but may be extended in particular cases.

Services provided under the IHSS are:

- *Case Coordination, Information and Referrals*, which includes a case coordination plan based on an initial needs assessment, and information about and referral to other service providers and mainstream agencies
- *On Arrival Reception and Assistance*, which includes meeting eligible entrants on arrival, taking them to suitable 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.¹⁴

In 2003 the Department of Immigration, together with the Department of Health and Ageing, commissioned consultancy firm, Urbis Keys Young, to carry out a combined evaluation of the IHSS and of Commonwealth funded services for survivors of torture and trauma. The resulting report identified some areas in which the provision of services under the IHSS could be improved, but found that 'on the whole the IHSS is able to identify and meet the initial settlement needs of humanitarian entrants in an equitable, effective, efficient and timely manner'.¹⁵

Complex Case Support Program

The Complex Case Support program (CCS) was implemented nationally in October 2008, following a staged roll-out that began in August 2008. It is designed to assist recently arrived

14. For further information see Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Fact Sheet 66: Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy*, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/66ihss.htm>, accessed on 4 March 2009.

15. Urbis Keys Young, *Evaluation of the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy*, Report prepared for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, May 2003, p. 18, http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/pdf/evaluation_report.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2009.

refugees and other humanitarian entrants in difficult and unique circumstances where their needs cannot be adequately addressed by existing services. This includes situations where pre-migration experiences, severe physical and mental health conditions, or crisis events after arrival in Australia present significant barriers to successful settlement. Eligibility for this service will continue for two years after arrival in Australia.

The CCS program is being delivered across Australia by the Humanitarian Services Panel. The panel comprises more than 30 organisations which are experienced in providing case management services to humanitarian entrants.¹⁶

Settlement Grants Program

The Settlement Grants Program (SGP) was developed following the review of settlement services detailed in the 2003 *Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants*. The SGP combines funding previously provided to Migrant Resource Centres and Migrant Service Agencies and the Community Settlement Services Scheme.

Funding provided through the SGP aims to assist humanitarian entrants and migrants settle in Australia and participate equitably in Australian society as soon as possible after arrival. The program is designed to meet the settlement needs of recently arrived humanitarian migrants and family stream migrants, as well as dependants of skilled migrants in rural or regional areas, with low levels of English proficiency. The SGP helps new arrivals access people and organisations who can assist them in finding jobs, accommodation, health care and other relevant services. The focus is on building individuals' self-reliance and fostering connections with mainstream services.

The SGP funds organisations to implement projects in three key areas: assisting new arrivals to orient themselves to their new community; helping new communities to develop; and promoting social participation and integration.

Funding to organisations is made on a project basis, with funding priorities for particular regions and communities determined by an annual needs-based planning process. A total of \$32 million is available for the SGP in 2008–09. Of this, approximately \$22 million is to fund new projects, while the remaining \$10 million is for ongoing grant commitments.¹⁷

16. For further information see Department of Immigration and Citizenship web site, *Complex Case Services*, <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-programs/ccs.htm>, accessed on 29 January 2009.

17. For further information see Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Fact Sheet 92: Settlement Grants Program*, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/92funding.htm>, accessed on 4 March 2009.

Adult Migrant English Program

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) has been providing English classes to eligible adult migrants since 1948. It is designed to teach migrants functional English in order to enable them to settle successfully into Australia, providing the basic language skills necessary to deal with everyday social situations and some work situations.

Eligible migrants have a legislative entitlement (under the *Immigration (Education) Act 1971*) to study English for up to 510 hours or until they reach functional English, whichever comes first. Additional tuition is available to humanitarian migrants with limited education or difficult pre-migration experiences such as torture or trauma.

AMEP classes are delivered by contracted service providers who specialise in teaching English as a second language. Teaching from more than 250 locations around Australia, service providers assess new arrivals for eligibility for the program, arrange free childcare for students with under-school age children while the parent attends class, and provide ongoing educational counselling to help clients plan for future study.¹⁸

Translating and Interpreting Service National

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National is designed to enable communication between people who do not speak English and 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. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for any person or organisation in Australia requiring interpreting services.

Interpreting tasks are assigned to interpreters based on their accreditation standard, geographical location and availability. Priority is given to interpreters with National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) professional accreditation or recognition. Requests can also be made for male and female interpreters in sensitive or gender-specific interpreting assignments.

TIS National operates largely on a fee-for-service basis, however some services are provided free of charge. Non-English speaking Australian citizens or permanent residents are eligible for free translating and interpreting services for the purposes of communicating with: private medical practitioners providing Medicare-rebateable services and their reception staff; non-profit, non-government, community-based organisations providing case work and emergency

18. For further information see Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Fact Sheet 94: English Classes for Permanent Adult Migrants in Australia*, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/94amep.htm>, accessed on 4 March 2009.

services; Members of Parliament; some local government authorities; trade unions; and Emergency Management Australia.¹⁹

Living in Harmony Program

While not technically classed as a settlement service, the Living in Harmony program is a key ingredient in the Australian Government's plan for integrating migrants and fostering social cohesion. The focus of the Living in Harmony program is to build social cohesion through the promotion of the concepts of respect, participation, a sense of belonging, and Australian values. It comprises four elements:

- funding of local community projects designed to engage the whole community in building positive relations
- partnerships with iconic national and regional organisations such as large community, sporting and government bodies that work together to promote Australian values, mutual respect and participation
- funds to support communities responding to crises and emerging priority issues outside the annual funded community projects round, and
- a public information strategy, utilising outcomes from past funded community projects and partnerships to develop resources for dissemination and use in various sectors of the community.²⁰

Areas of current and future need

While Australia's settlement services are advanced by world standards there are nevertheless areas in which improvements can be made. DIAC regularly consults with community settlement service providers and the Refugee Council of Australia (Refugee Council) on current settlement concerns. The Refugee Council provides an annual submission to DIAC on Australia's humanitarian program which outlines community views on current challenges and future directions of the program. This covers both the makeup and administration of the humanitarian program, as well as the immediate and longer term settlement needs of humanitarian entrants.

In its 2009 submission the Refugee Council notes that Australia's settlement services for humanitarian entrants are among the best in the world, but that there is still room for

19. For further information see Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Fact Sheet 91: Translating and Interpreting Service*, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/91tis.htm>, accessed on 4 March 2009.

20. For further information see the Living in Harmony web site, <http://www.harmony.gov.au/>, accessed on 4 March 2009.

improvement.²¹ For example, there are concerns relating to access to the services offered under the IHSS, which differs according to the category of humanitarian visa a person holds. Concern has also been expressed that annual grants-based funding such as that offered under the Settlement Grants Program, makes it difficult for service providers and community organisations to develop meaningful longer term projects to assist new arrivals.

The Refugee Council argues that all humanitarian entrants should be eligible for the same level of support on an as-needed basis, rather than on the basis of their visa class. Also, the IHSS system requires that certain services be provided by mainstream agencies, where these are available (for example, income support and Job Network services). The Refugee Council is concerned that not all mainstream agencies are equipped to deal with the needs of refugees. The issue identified by the Refugee Council as the number one concern for refugees, impacting significantly on their overall settlement experience, is access to housing. Once humanitarian entrants exit the IHSS they often face difficulties in accessing suitable housing, facing barriers such as a shortage of public housing, discrimination from real estate agents, difficulties in completing paperwork and providing the documentation necessary to access the private rental market, and lack of affordable private housing in areas close to employment and community links. The Refugee Council recommends that DIAC coordinate a comprehensive strategy to meet the long-term housing needs of refugees and humanitarian entrants.

Language issues, economic difficulties, housing barriers, unemployment and cultural differences, can pose problems for some new migrants and refugees to such an extent that the hurdles seem insurmountable. Refugees are particularly vulnerable and can arrive with very specific health problems and language or cultural barriers, making it difficult for them to settle healthily and happily into the community. Some may have been tortured or experienced other trauma either before or during their journey here for example. Although migrants usually have access to our health services and refugees have access to more intensive health assistance such as trauma counselling, some critics argue that the level of understanding by health providers and other service providers is inadequate to meet the highly complex needs

21. Refugee Council of Australia, *Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program: Community views on current challenges and future directions*, January 2009, pp. 42–78, http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/docs/resources/submissions/2009-10_intakesub.pdf, accessed on 12 February 2009. The Refugee Council web site also contains information on current issues and concerns related to settlement, <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/current/index.html>, accessed on 12 February 2009.

of refugees and other migrants.²² There are also specific concerns for refugees settling in regional areas, including isolation, poverty and vilification.²³

In spite of the existing settlement services available to new migrants and refugees, those who have been in the country for less than five years are often at a disadvantage when it comes to finding work. In June 2005, there were 36 400 unemployed migrants who had arrived in Australia between 2001 and 2005, most of whom were from non-English speaking backgrounds.²⁴ Those from the Middle East and Africa, in particular, have much higher unemployment rates which may lead to disaffection and community unrest in the long run if not addressed. Some commentators suggest, for example, that the Cronulla race riots of December 2005 were the result of disaffection by certain community groups with low educational and occupational opportunities.²⁵

Refugee and humanitarian resettlement from Africa

There has been concern raised in recent years that the settlement needs of refugees from Africa are not being adequately addressed. In 2006–07, 51 per cent of the offshore humanitarian visas granted were to Africans, many of whom are resettled in areas where the numbers of African refugees have swelled from nothing to several hundred in the space of only two or three years. Previously, Australia's humanitarian intake was primarily from Europe and the Middle East. Despite the extra attention the recent refugees from Africa are receiving in the planning and delivery of settlement services, there has been some concern expressed by refugee advocates and other members of the community that Australia has not been adequately prepared to cope with the special needs of African refugees arriving with poor education, poor health, poor language skills and a history of brutalisation and trauma from years of civil wars and experiences in refugee camps.²⁶ Providing adequate settlement

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22. S. Murray and S. Skull, 'Hurdles to Health: immigrant and refugee health care in Australia', *Australian Health Review*, vol. 29 no. 1, February 2005, pp. 25–9, http://parlinfoweb.parl.net/parlinfo/view_document.aspx?ID=148247&TABLE=jrnart&TARGET=, accessed on 20 August 2008.
 23. J. Taylor and D. Stanovic, *Refugees and Regional Settlement: Balancing priorities*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, 2005, http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/refugees_and_regional_settlement.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2009.
 24. T. Kryger, 'High unemployment at a time of low unemployment', *Research Note*, no. 15, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2005–06, http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb/TranslateWIPILink.aspx?Folder=prspub&Criteria=CITATION_ID:W5SH6%3B, accessed on 4 March 2009.
 25. J. Zubrzycki, 'Cronulla A Wake-Up Call for Multiculturalism', *New Matilda*, 25 January 2006, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p?query=Id%3A%22library%2Fjrnart%2FLTL16%22>, accessed on 4 March 2009.
 26. For example, see Centre for Refugee Research, *Submission regarding the settlement of African humanitarian entrants in NSW*, January 2006, <http://www.crr.unsw.edu.au/documents/CRCSubmission2006.pdf>, accessed on 4 March 2009,

services to African refugees is made even more challenging by the diverse backgrounds and needs of people in this category. Many different languages may be spoken by people from the one country, and culture, customs, and education levels differ widely according to the country, region, ethnic group, and social class from which a person comes.

The Australian Government has made some progress in acknowledging the specific settlement difficulties faced by humanitarian entrants from Africa. For example, in 2006–07 DIAC developed an orientation DVD, *Australia, a new home*, to help settlement service providers deliver information on life in Australia to newly-arrived humanitarian entrants from Africa, particularly those with low levels of literacy in their first language and in English. The DVD aims to deliver important settlement information in a simple and accessible format. It is available in seven different languages (Amharic, Dinka, Kirundi, Sudanese Arabic, Swahili, Tigrinya and English), supported by English subtitles.

The increase in numbers of humanitarian entrants from Africa has created tension in some communities, and has shone the spotlight on issues of social cohesion and integration. In 2007 the then Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, the Hon. Kevin Andrews MP, stated that ‘recent refugee and humanitarian arrivals from the region of Africa are continuing to experience difficulty in successfully settling in Australia, and the result is high levels of community concern’.²⁷ He went on to announce that the proportion of refugees accepted into Australia from Africa under the offshore humanitarian program would be reduced to 30 per cent, down from 51 per cent in 2006–07. Some commentators and members of the public agreed that migration from Africa should be reduced due to concerns about difficulties in integrating and the resulting problems for social cohesion, while many others criticised Andrews’ comments as being racist and inflammatory.²⁸

and A. Nsubuga-Kyobe, ‘Settlement services and African communities’, *Migration Action*, v. 25, no. 2, 2003, pp. 20–4,

http://parlinfoweb.parl.net/parlinfo/view_document.aspx?ID=130576&TABLE=jrnart&TARGET=, accessed on 4 March 2009. For details on some of the experiences of African refugees, and attempts by Australia and the international community to cater to their specific needs, see P. Brown, *The Longest Journey: resettling refugees from Africa*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2006.

27. K. Andrews, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, *Statement of Refugee and Humanitarian Intake 2007–08*, media release, Parliament House, Canberra, 4 October 2007, http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb/TranslateWIPILink.aspx?Folder=pressrel&Criteria=CITATION_ID:7RIO6%3B, accessed on 4 March 2009.

28. For an example from each side of the debate, see N. Mitchell, ‘Above the law in the suburbs’, *Herald Sun*, 4 October 2007, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p?query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressclp%2FUBHO6%22>, accessed on 4 March 2009 and T. Costello, ‘Fear shows its ugly face’, *Herald Sun*, 11 October 2007, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p?query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressclp%2FFWJO6%22>, accessed on 4 March 2009.

The component of the 2008–09 humanitarian program allocated to Africans has been set at 33 per cent, exactly the same as the share allocated to each of the Middle East and Asia (the remaining one per cent is set aside for contingencies).²⁹ It would appear that the program's focus is no longer fixed largely on Africa (at least for now), however, the challenges faced by humanitarian entrants from Africa, those already here and those still to come, will continue to demand attention.

The challenge of temporary migration

Australia has long considered itself a country of permanent, rather than temporary, migration. As such, settlement and related services have traditionally been provided only to permanent migrants. Implicit in the very phrase 'settlement service' is the assumption that the beneficiaries of such services are engaging in permanent relocation to Australia—that they are 'settling' in our country and our community for good. However, it is becoming more and more apparent that temporary migrants are playing a significant role in Australia's immigration program, particularly in the case of temporary skilled migration. Statistics collected by the Department of Immigration show that as at 30 June 2008 there were 245 479 temporary residents present in Australia.³⁰ In 2007–08 there were 110 570 visas granted in the Temporary Business Long Stay (Subclass 457) category alone.³¹ There is a strong argument that these migrants are needed to fill skills shortages in crucial industry and service sectors. That being the case, it is in the interests of the Australian economy and community to attract such migrants, and provide them with the necessary support to enable them to successfully live and work in Australia. It is therefore relevant to consider the role that settlement and related services may play in relation to temporary migrants and the contribution they are able to make to Australia during their stay.

For many, temporary migration is the first step on the road to permanent migration. It has been noted that Australia's immigration policy in recent years 'has been shifting towards a

29. C. Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, *Australia balances refugee priorities*, media release, Parliament House, Canberra, 20 June 2008, <http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2008/ce08056.htm>, accessed on 4 March 2009.

30. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Temporary Entrants in Australia Data, Temporary Residents Present in Australia - Country of Birth by Quarterly Report Date 2007–08*, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/statistical-info/temp-entrants/tempres.htm>, accessed on 29 January 2009. Temporary residents include working holiday makers, long term temporary business entrants and other persons intending to work or temporarily reside in Australia. These types of temporary resident visas are granted on the basis of there being an economic, social, cultural or sporting benefit to Australia. Initial stay in Australia is generally for more than 3 months but not more than 4 years.

31. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Subclass 457 Business (Long Stay) – State/Territory Summary Report 2007–08*, Canberra, 2008, http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/pdf/457_stats_07_08.pdf, accessed on 4 March 2009.

'funneling' process where immigrants enter Australia on a range of temporary long-stay visas but are able to convert to permanent residence after a period'.³² Academic Graeme Hugo noted in 2004 that 'the proportion of all persons granted permanent residence who were onshore applicants has risen from 11.6 per cent in 1989–90 to 30.0 per cent in 2002–03. This undoubtedly has implications for government settlement policy and programs'.³³ It is reasonable to assume that many in this category will be skilled migrants, and therefore not eligible for most of the specific settlement programs currently on offer. However, many will bring with them families who, were they in fact permanent migrants, would be eligible for some settlement assistance, for example under the Settlement Grants Program. Those who eventually do settle here permanently would almost certainly benefit from settlement assistance from the time they first arrive in Australia, rather than years later when they make the transition from being temporary to permanent migrants.

Even those temporary migrants who do not go on to settle permanently in Australia are likely to benefit from some form of settlement assistance. Temporary migrants may be in Australia for many years. In many ways, temporary migrants become an integral part of the community in which they live. Many bring their families with them, their children may attend school, and they become involved in their community. They are often relied on to fill labour shortages in particular areas, thus playing a crucial role in the survival of some communities. However, neither the temporary migrant nor the community in which they live will reap the full benefits of such an arrangement if the presence of migrant workers leads to social tensions due to their failure to 'integrate'. It is thus in everyone's interests to ensure that migrant workers are welcomed and made to feel at home no matter how long their stay. Providing temporary migrants and their families with some sort of assistance allowing them to participate more fully and comfortably in Australian life could therefore assist not just the migrants themselves, but also the communities in which they live.

The international experience would suggest that if efforts are not made to assist temporary migrants to live successfully in Australia for the duration of their stay, then exploitation, isolation and social ostracism may result, potentially leading to increased racial tension and disharmony. The Report of the Global Commission on International Migration observes that:

... in the interests of social cohesion and harmony, it is essential to ensure that migrants who have been admitted to another state on a temporary basis benefit from the process of inclusion, in the sense that their human rights are respected; that they are protected from

32. P. McDonald and G. Withers, *Population and Australia's Future Labour Force*, Occasional Policy Paper 1/2008, Policy Paper No. 7, The Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, Canberra, 2008, p. 15.

33. G. Hugo, 'A new global migration regime', *Around the Globe*, vol.1, no. 3, December 2004, pp. 18–23, http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb/TranslateWIPILink.aspx?Folder=jmart&Criteria=CITATION_ID:31QE6%3B, accessed on 4 March 2009.

exploitation or abuse, and that they are able to establish convivial relationships with other members of society.³⁴

In one assessment of temporary migration programs in Europe it was found that ‘the failure of host countries to begin the integration process soon after the arrival of migrants in the country ... has exacerbated the plight of this marginalised group in the host society resulting in social exclusion and societal tensions’.³⁵ With concern already being expressed in Australia about issues relating to immigration and social cohesion (for example, see above discussion of migrants from Africa), ignoring the needs of temporary migrants may therefore prove to be problematic.

Pacific seasonal worker pilot scheme

On 17 August 2008 the Rudd Government announced plans to pilot a Pacific seasonal worker program, under which workers from four Pacific Island countries would come to Australia for up to seven months in any 12 month period to work in the horticultural sector.³⁶ The pilot will provide up to 2500 visas over three years. The first group of workers arrived in Australia in February 2009. The plan has been welcomed by some sectors, particularly fruit growers and others in the industry who see it as a solution to the problem of labour shortages, which they claim leads to millions of dollars worth of produce going to waste each year. Others have expressed concern that the scheme will take jobs away from Australian workers, and lead to the creation of a disenfranchised underclass of guest workers.

It is significant that the pilot is being managed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)—it is very much considered an issue of employment policy, rather than immigration. Employers of the seasonal workers will be required to prove that they have made efforts to employ Australians before being permitted to employ an overseas worker. They will also be required to participate in training and career development programs for Australians who are not job-ready. It has been made very clear that the scheme is not intended to be a path to permanent migration to Australia. It is intended to have a development impact in the Pacific Island nations that participate, through remittances sent

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34. Global Commission on International Migration, *Migration in an interconnected world: New directions for action*, Geneva, 2005, p. 51, <http://www.gcim.org/attachements/gcim-complete-report-2005.pdf>, accessed on 28 August 2008.
 35. R. Cholewinski, *Temporary Migration in Europe in the Past and Present: General Features and Protection Afforded*, Presentation to the International Labour Organisation Workshop on Temporary Migration — Assessment and practical proposals for overcoming protection gaps, Geneva, 18–19 September 2003, p. 5, <http://www.oit.org/public/english/bureau/inst/download/cholewinski.pdf>, accessed on 4 March 2009.
 36. T. Burke, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, *Horticulture industry Pacific seasonal worker pilot scheme*, media release, Parliament House, Canberra, 17 August 2008, http://www.maff.gov.au/media/media_releases/2008/august_2008/horticulture_industry_pacific_seasonal_worker_pilot_scheme, accessed on 4 March 2009.

back by workers, and the skills, experience and income they will take back to their communities when they return. And it is expected that the workers will return home. Yet the expectation that these will be, in the very strictest sense, temporary migrant workers does not automatically rule out a need for settlement support of some kind.

The Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia has expressed concern that the seasonal workers program will lead to the creation of a marginalised, vulnerable underclass of migrant workers, which could fuel racial and social tensions, particularly if migrants are not offered essential support services. The Council has pointed to Britain and France as examples of countries in which an influx of migrant workers has led to social unrest.³⁷ Others, such as Senator Doug Cameron (NSW), are concerned that increasing levels of temporary work migration (including under the 457 visa program as well as through a seasonal worker program) have the potential to lead to a racist anti-immigration backlash such as has been seen in Britain.³⁸ Recent years have seen an exponential growth in support for the British Nationalist Party (BNP), which runs on an anti-immigration platform, resulting in electoral success at a number of Council elections including the London Assembly. The BNP's increased popularity has been attributed to voter disaffection with high numbers of migrant workers and concerns about immigrant communities not 'fitting in' and competing with struggling non-immigrant communities for jobs, housing and other services.³⁹ Ensuring that migrant workers have the necessary support services to help them settle in to the community, albeit temporarily, will be vital in minimising the risk of heightening such social and racial tensions in the Australian context.

This is particularly so in the current economic climate. The recent economic downturn (globally and in Australia) has led to an increased focus on the relationship between migrants and the economy. The permanent skilled migration program has been reduced for the 2008–09 program year amid concerns over rising unemployment and competition for jobs.⁴⁰ Temporary skilled migration is demand driven and theoretically rises and falls in response to local demand for labour. However in a climate of rising unemployment there is likely to be an increased risk of tension over migrant intakes and perceived competition for jobs, even in industries where there may be a shortage of skills and labour and such competition does not

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37. T. Laurie, 'Racial risk in Labor job plan', *West Australian*, 22 May 2008, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressclp%2FAPIQ6%22>, accessed on 4 March 2009.
 38. S. Donovan, 'Govt urged to rethink foreign labour immigration' *ABC News* online edition, 20 May 2008, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/05/20/2250298.htm>, accessed on 7 December 2008.
 39. See for example D. Casciani, 'BNP gains from Labor disaffection', *BBC News online*, 4 May 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7382831.stm, accessed on 2 March 2009.
 40. C. Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, *Government cuts migration program*, media release, Parliament House, Canberra, 16 March 2009, <http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2009/ce09030.htm>, accessed on 23 March 2009.

exist. In this context, it will be particularly important to ensure that temporary skilled migrants, who are recruited to fill such skills shortages, are given the support necessary to settle and integrate into the community, and that social and racial tensions are minimised.

The Australian Government has stated that employers participating in the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme will be required to cover 'establishment and pastoral care costs'.⁴¹ A fact sheet on pastoral care for seasonal workers released by DEEWR states that labour hire companies will be responsible for arranging, for each employee, services such as: transport; pre-departure and on-arrival briefings; assistance with accessing suitable accommodation, opening bank accounts, and accessing opportunities for recreation and religious observance; translations of work notices and guidelines; and on-farm inductions such as occupational health and safety briefings.⁴² Many of these requirements are targeted at ensuring workers are able to do their jobs safely and free from discrimination and harassment. Very little mention is made of support services to ensure they are able to live comfortably, safely and peacefully in the communities in which they work.

The Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme has been modelled on New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) Program, which was introduced in April 2007. Under that scheme, approved employers are permitted to hire workers from five neighbouring Pacific Island nations to work in horticulture and viticulture for a maximum seven months over an 11 month period. Employers must pay half of each worker's travel costs, provide pay for a minimum of 240 hours of work, provide 'pastoral care' (including accommodation, transportation, recreation, religious observance, and induction to New Zealand life), and pay costs associated with the removal of workers who overstay their visas.⁴³ A report on the first year of operation of the RSE program found that 'support services and pastoral care for seasonal workers are the weakest element of the program thus far'.⁴⁴ The report notes that workers have experienced problems such as boredom, isolation, lack of work in down times leading to less pay, disputes with employers, and inadequate housing. This can lead to antisocial behaviour such as alcohol abuse. The report also highlighted the potential for tension in the community when imported workers engage in antisocial behaviours, and compete with locals for jobs and housing. It recommends that, when developing a seasonal

41. T. Burke, op. cit.

42. Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *Pastoral Care Fact Sheet*, http://www.workplace.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/66337834-BE02-471A-9A6E-C85BE2B62F1B/0/PSWPS_factsheet13.pdf, accessed on 1 December 2008.

43. For a detailed examination of the New Zealand scheme see M. Klapdor, 'New Zealand's Seasonal Guest Worker Scheme', Background Note, Parliamentary Library, Canberra 13 May 2008, online only, <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/BN/2007-08/NZSeasonalWorker.htm>, accessed on 1 December 2008.

44. N. Maclellan, *Workers for All Seasons? Issues from New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) program*, Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Hawthorn, May 2008, p. 4, http://www.sisr.net/publications/0805maclellan_RSE.pdf, accessed on 1 December 2008.

worker program, 'Australian policy makers need to investigate innovative solutions to address social problems arising from temporary labour programs'.⁴⁵

DIAC has indicated that it is in discussions with the communities involved in the seasonal worker pilot regarding community engagement activities to assist in building a positive relationship between seasonal workers and the communities hosting them:

The intention is to fund a range of activities designed to promote positive community relations in those locations. The precise activities are being developed between the employers, local government, industry groups and the community organisations in those locations. Our expectation is that they will include sporting and other social activities that might involve local community groups such as the CWA, Rotary, the Lions Club and those kinds of organisations. The aim of the projects will be to improve mutual understanding and community understanding of different perspectives that people might bring to the table and to the circumstances they find themselves in in Robinvale and Griffith.⁴⁶

It remains to be seen, as the pilot progresses, how extensive these activities will be, and how effectively they will contribute to the successful settlement of the seasonal workers during their stay in Australia.

The New Zealand example shows that if Australia's seasonal worker pilot is to be successful in its long-term aims of providing necessary labour for the horticulture industry, and providing development benefits for the Pacific nations from which workers are drawn, it will be vital to ensure that adequate settlement support is provided to workers to enable them to live successfully in the community for the duration of their stay. Otherwise, not only may workers be unwilling to return next season, but heightened social tensions may create a backlash against seasonal workers, and migrant workers more broadly, with the potential to undermine the entire program.

Conclusion

The settlement services offered to migrants and refugees in Australia have evolved over the last 60 years, from the provision of very basic on-arrival assistance to the current system which provides a range of both immediate and ongoing programs designed to facilitate the long-term settlement of new arrivals into Australian society. Settlement assistance today is targeted largely at meeting the specific needs of humanitarian entrants. This will undoubtedly continue to be the primary focus of Australia's formal settlement assistance for years to come, and it will be important to ensure that the settlement services offered continue to meet the particular, often demanding, needs of humanitarian entrants from Africa.

45. *ibid.* p. 23.

46. K. Pope, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Additional Budget Estimates*, Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, 24 February 2009, p. 33.

However, migration trends continue to change and evolve, and the settlement needs of migrants and refugees do not remain constant over time. Community concerns relating to migrant intake are similarly dynamic. With the current growth in temporary migration to Australia, and increasing community concern about social cohesion, harmony and security, the challenge for the future will be how best to meet the needs of this large, and often vulnerable, group of temporary migrants.

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