

## FACTSHEET 1

### *Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants: What's the Difference?*

#### **REFUGEE**

**A person who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution on racial, religious, ethnic or political grounds.**

Australia uses this definition of 'refugee' to determine the legitimacy of claims for refugee status in Australia. If a person is found to be a refugee, Australia has an obligation to offer support and ensure the person is not sent back to the country of origin against his/her will.

#### **ASYLUM SEEKER**

A person who has applied for protection and is awaiting a determination on his/her status as a refugee.

Whereas refugees are people who have already been determined as meeting the criteria for refugee status, asylum seekers are people whose status is in the process of being determined.

#### **MIGRANT**

Migrants choose to leave their country to seek a better life. They choose where they migrate to and they can usually return whenever they like. They have time to prepare for their trip and their new life.

By contrast, refugees are forced to leave their country, often without warning and preparation, and cannot return unless the situation that forced them to leave improves. The concerns of refugees are human rights and safety, not economic advantage.

## FACTSHEET 2

### *Many Waves of Refugees*

Over the years, Australia has assisted refugees from many parts of the world.

- After World War II, most refugees came from countries such as **Germany, Poland and the Ukraine**.
- In the 1950s, refugees started coming from **Hungary** (due to the Hungarian Uprising).
- In the 1960s, many came from **Czechoslovakia**.
- In the 1970s and 1980s, refugees started coming from Indochina (especially **Vietnam**) and Latin America (**Chile and El Salvador**).
- The 1990s were dominated by the Balkan War, with large numbers of refugees coming from **Bosnia and Croatia**.
- In the 1990s there were also large numbers arriving from the **Middle East and South Asia**. Many of these people were ethnic and religious minorities, or opponents of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan or Saddam Hussien's regime in Iraq.
- In the 2000s the majority of refugees have come from Africa, in particular **Sudan**. Refugees have also continued to come from the Middle East and South Asia (especially **Burma**).

## FACTSHEET 3

### *Many Streams*

People can seek entry to Australia through the **Migration Program** (for skilled and family migrants) or the **Humanitarian Program** (for refugees and others in humanitarian need).

**The Humanitarian Program** consists of:

- The **Refugee Program** - for people subject to persecution in their home country and in need of resettlement.
- The **Special Humanitarian Program (SHP)** – assists the reunion of families. Applicants for the SHP visa must be supported by a proposer who is an Australian citizen, permanent resident or a community organisation based in Australia. However, the sponsored person must qualify as a refugee in his/her own right.

SHP entrants receive less support than Refugee visa entrants.

Proposers are required to offer support to applicants upon arrival in Australia. This includes assistance with airfares, medical examinations and accommodation.

Refugees can also arrive in Australia as onshore **asylum seekers**.

Onshore resettlement is the process by which asylum seekers apply for refugee status once they have already arrived in Australia (eg by boat).

The Australian government then determines the status of their application.

The resettlement of refugees in Australia is handled by the Federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).

## FACTSHEET 4

### *Recent Settlers in Maroondah*

Over the 5 financial years 2002/2007, 471 humanitarian settlers (refugees) settled in the City of Maroondah.

Most of these settlers were of **Burmese** origin (277 people or 59% of humanitarian settlers)<sup>1</sup> and over a quarter were of **Sudanese** origin (146 people or 31%)<sup>2</sup>.

Maroondah is now home to the largest Burmese community in Melbourne's east. Most of these refugees are of Karen or Chin ethnicity, coming from regions along the south-east and eastern peripheries of Burma.

Maroondah will continue to receive high numbers of refugee settlers over the next few years, particularly refugees from Burma. Most of these arrivals will continue to come through the Refugee Program, but an increasing number will be sponsored by family members already living in Maroondah (under the Special Humanitarian Program).

In fact, Maroondah has already received 43 humanitarian settlers in 2008, and 39 of these settlers are of Burmese origin.

It is important to note that most refugee settlers born in Thailand are of Burmese origin, having been born in the refugee camps in Thailand. Similarly, most refugees born in Kenya and Uganda are of Sudanese origin.

***\*Further data about recent settlers can be obtained from the DIAC Settlement Reports available online at [www.settlement.immi.gov.au](http://www.settlement.immi.gov.au)***

<sup>1</sup> Includes humanitarian settlers born in Thailand

<sup>2</sup> Includes humanitarian settlers born in Kenya and Uganda

## FACTSHEET 5

### *Settlement Services*

The **Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS)** provides services to help refugees to establish their lives in Australia.

These services include:

- on-arrival reception and orientation
- information about and referral to other service providers
- assistance with accommodation and basic household goods
- short term torture and trauma counselling.

Services are provided for six months, but may be extended for particularly vulnerable clients.

The Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) contracts IHSS services to service providers.

The **Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES)** is the IHSS service provider in the Eastern Metropolitan Region. AMES has an office in Box Hill and also provides education services (eg English language classes) through Swinburne University in Croydon and KYM Employment Services in Ringwood.

When humanitarian entrants exit the IHSS (usually 6 months post-arrival), they are referred to general settlement services, such as the **Migrant Information Centre (MIC)** in Box Hill. The MIC provides services for up to 5 years post-arrival to humanitarian settlers and family/skilled migrants with low English proficiency.