

Settlement Council of Australia

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4th July 2011

Inquiry Secretary
Joint Parliamentary Inquiry on Multiculturalism
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
PO Box 6021
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Hearn,

Re: Additional evidence to the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry on Multiculturalism

The Settlement Council of Australia is most grateful to have had the opportunity to present to the Inquiry in person on Friday 17th June. Being able to speak directly to the members of the Committee about multiculturalism and our recommendations to strengthen multiculturalism in Australia was appreciated. The conversation allowed us all to explore the issue, which is of keen interest to our members, in more depth. Philosophical debate about the language we use in Australia as we discuss the support provided to people from a variety of cultures is important, to ensure that the terms we use are understood, and the principles which underlie them are supported and known.

In our evidence presented on the day SCOA mentioned a report on secondary movement, which is attached here for the Committee's reference. It points to the opportunities and challenges posed by regional settlement and secondary movement as refugee communities spontaneously move to new areas as they learn of job markets in regional locations. As highlighted in the recently launched report by Professor Hugo (Economic, Social and Civic Contributions of First and Second Generation Humanitarian Entrants, DIAC, May 11), refugees and humanitarian entrants fill important employment niches in regional communities. Regional areas present specific challenges in terms of service delivery for settlement agencies. Many regional areas are subject to fluctuating populations and service providers, so capacity building and advocacy in this milieu is an ongoing concern due to service and staff changes and the xenophobic nature of small communities that need to be constantly supported to have ownership of resettlement. Service coordination and responsiveness to support multiculturalism in settlement services and mainstream agencies is an important factor in any community, but is especially relevant in regional Australia.

Settlement agencies provide excellent support to refugees and migrants across the country, and it is important that this support is complemented by mainstream service delivery provision which has within its foundation an awareness of and sensitivity to culture and the role that culture plays in people's lives. Services, across the whole spectrum of government agencies, need to be trained and supported to enable them to provide services to any Australian, whatever their cultural heritage. If we support agencies to develop cultural competency in their service delivery, so that services will be better able to provide appropriate support to all, regardless of where people may be in their settlement journey, or how long they have lived in Australia. This approach will also pay dividends for services in equipping agencies to deal with difference more broadly, however this difference may be presented, be it a migrant, refugee, someone with a disability, or a person of indigenous heritage.

SCOA calls for a federal framework to support multiculturalism, which will ensure that access and equity is supported by culturally competent service provision. Such a framework as the foundation of all service provision

will, over time, break down current silos which may exist in some service areas, where some agencies and projects may be doing great work, which is unknown in other areas.

SCOA supports the ongoing use of the term 'multicultural' to describe Australia, as we feel it accurately describes the wonderfully complex blend of cultures which make Australia such a wonderful country.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if clarification is sought on any points raised.

Yours sincerely,



Sky de Jersey
Executive Officer

Attachment: Settlement and Mobility Report, 1 June 2011

Attachment (separate jpg files): Corrections to the Hansard Transcript, Friday 17th June



Refugee Council
of Australia



NATIONAL SETTLEMENT POLICY NETWORK

Settlement and mobility:

Exploring models of support and challenges faced by recently arrived refugees who move to secondary settlement locations

REPORT

BACKGROUND

The movement of refugee and humanitarian entrants from one location to another in their early stages of settlement presents a series of challenges for individuals, communities and service providers. This teleconference explored the implications of inter- or intra-state mobility and refugee settlement, with presentations and discussion focussing on the following questions:

1. After settling in Australia, where are newly arrived refugee communities moving to and from (current trends)?
2. Why do people move to secondary settlement locations (push/pull factors)?
3. What are the challenges for refugee individuals and communities who move inter- or intra-state?
4. What are the challenges for service providers in meeting the needs of refugee individuals and communities who have moved from another region or state in their first five years of settlement?
5. What are examples of support that have worked well in secondary settlement locations?
6. What needs to happen to better support the settlement needs of recently arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants who move inter- and intra-state?

SETTLEMENT POLICY NETWORK TELECONFERENCE

The National Settlement Policy Network teleconference was held on Wednesday 1st June 2011 and involved participants dialling in from hubs in ACT, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. Presenters included:

- Vincent Giuca, Refugee Support Branch, Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- Michael Krafft and Tejal Thanki, ACCES Services (QLD);
- Paul Kyaw, Multicultural Services Centre of Western Australia (WA)
- Anni Gallagher, Orange City Council (NSW)

OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES RAISED

The following observations and issues were raised by presenters and discussion participants, and from feedback provided by participants after the teleconference. Issues have been grouped by theme.

Background and definitions

- Secondary settlement refers to people relocating from their original on-arrival settlement location to another place within their first five years after arriving in Australia.
- Feedback received by RCOA after the teleconference raised concerns about the label “secondary settlement”, as often people can and do move multiple times and settlement is a dynamic process. It was suggested that “relocation” is a better term.
- Humanitarian entrants on permanent visas are like any permanent resident; they are free to move. Clients who exit Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) are like any other Australian; they can and do relocate.
- One participant raised the question of why we needed data on the mobility of humanitarian entrants as we don’t track any other permanent residents i.e. why is this an issue? Discussion followed about the need to understand settlement and mobility trends better to enable better planning of services. For example, services had difficulty responding to community needs in the case of the spontaneous relocation of ~500 Sudanese community members from the City of Greater Dandenong to Latrobe Valley in Victoria. Another example cited was the spontaneous relocation of mainly Afghan and Tamil single men from Brisbane to Rockhampton in Queensland. Local services struggled to get a handle on how to respond and there were no IHSS or SGP providers in Rockhampton at the time.
- Feedback from the teleconference also highlighted concerns about how people are defined and labelled. Examples given included using the terms “IMAs” (Irregular Maritime Arrivals), “migrants” and “refugees” interchangeably, as well as using terms such as “ex-detainees” and “multicultural people”. There is a need for consideration of how service providers and advocates label people and the potential impact of our language.

Data

- It is hard to find accurate statistics on the mobility trends of recently arrived humanitarian entrants as existing data sources all have limitations.
- The 2011 Census could provide the most up-to-date and accurate data when released.
- The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) uses the Humanitarian Entrants Management System (HEMS) database for HSS providers to track clients, but this is not set up as a tool for analysing mobility trends and tracks only HSS clients. Clients are not required to provide updated contact details to DIAC post-HSS.
- The online DIAC Settlement Reporting database (<http://www.immi.gov.au/settlement/>) provides longer-term data on refugee entrants, but has limitations as it is only up-to-date if people update their address with Medicare.
- Settlement Grants Program (SGP) providers do not track individual clients.
- Centrelink data is available on request and can be a good source of data, but will not capture all humanitarian entrants as they need to be getting income support to be included in the Centrelink database.

Current trends

- DIAC tries to place people where they have links, and if they do not have links, where they can be ‘at home’. However, people still move to be closer to friends/family/community or for employment, housing or lifestyle reasons.

- It is estimated that humanitarian entrants settling through the offshore program do not move that much in the first five years (5%?), however there is much higher mobility among humanitarian entrants who are granted permanent protection onshore (particularly Afghan and Tamil community).
- Some recently arrived humanitarian entrants relocate multiple times.
- In areas of spontaneous settlement, the community can be quite fluid. In Orange, for example, there has been an ebb and flow in the size of the Sudanese community. People sometimes stay for only a short time and then disappear.

Push/pull factors

- Pull: In Queensland, service providers found there was lots of interest from HSS clients to relocate to regional areas, particularly those who come from rural backgrounds (e.g. Burmese), because of the lifestyle and familiarity with agricultural labour market.
- Pull: The economic boom in Queensland and demand for labour in regional areas as drawn people to regional areas for work.
- Pull: In the case of former detainees, finding employment is a priority and they will relocate to where jobs are.
- Push/Pull: One community member highlighted that we are social animals, and that people want to live near their friends and family. Even if there are great employment opportunities and housing in a settlement location, people will be drawn and relocate to where they find their community.
- Push/Pull: The availability of affordable housing can be a key reason behind relocation.
- Push: Some humanitarian entrants find there is a lack of opportunities in urban areas.
- Push: In larger cities, some new arrivals find it harder to integrate. People from rural backgrounds feel like 'uninvited guests' in big cities.

Challenges for individuals/communities

- One community member suggested that if the local community is welcoming, new settlers will be happy and are more likely to stay.
- The bigger the family, the harder it is to relocate. One participant felt that people considering relocation should be encouraged to first visit an area before deciding to move.
- People think the grass is greener, but sometimes don't realise the implications of relocation. For example, if they move they cannot get another allocation of household goods.
- Sometimes people expect the same services to be available when they relocate when in reality there are not (e.g. there are Dinka language aides in some Sydney schools, but not in Orange).
- New arrivals moving to remote areas with limited English can make them vulnerable. There needs to be appropriate opportunities for people to learn English – particularly workplace-specific English for mature age people with limited education. For example, if someone is a carpenter, they can find it difficult to work even though the tools are the same. If there is opportunity for them to learn on-the-job English relevant to their industry, they can be productive members of the community.
- Transport is an issue, particularly in regional and rural locations where some secondary settlement is happening. New arrivals need help to get a driver's licence in these areas.
- Not all regional areas provide employment opportunities and there needs to be targeted assistance for people to find work. For example, in Orange, some of the community that relocated from Sydney have not been successful in finding employment after a number of years, even though they have participated in lots of training.
- Where people relocate and do not find appropriate support, there is the potential of exploitation by unscrupulous employers.

Challenges for service providers

- There is no funding within Job Services Australia to support the relocation of people – in this case, humanitarian entrants – to areas with labour shortages.
- In the case of spontaneous settlement in Rockhampton, the local council and services felt unprepared and had little experience working with and welcoming people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The new settlers in the area were ‘highly visible’ and the (negative) behaviour of some individuals was generalised to the whole community (e.g. Afghan Muslims).
- Local councils want to be involved, but often don’t know how to get involved.
- In the case of planned secondary settlement, there needs to be recognition and awareness of the history of local settlement. The reaction of local communities can be negative if they associate new arrivals with previous negative experiences. It is important to get local community and leaders involved and on board (e.g. Tamworth settlement experience divided the community).

What works well

- Pre-movement investment in raising awareness within local communities where relocation of humanitarian entrants is planned.
- Ensuring there are established links to schools, housing and employment before planned relocation.
- Equipping new arrivals with information and confidence to be able to make informed decisions about relocation (i.e. the grass is not always greener).
- Direct regional settlement can work well for some families that come from rural backgrounds (i.e. so they are not relocating after arriving).
- Coordination of services – in the case of Orange in NSW, housing, education, council and other services came together to form the Orange Multicultural Network to plan services and response to the spontaneous settlement of Sudanese community members which started around December 2005.
- Capacity building – providing education/training to services and the local community in the context of new people relocating to an area. For example, encouraging services to use interpreters and take on cultural competency training.
- Partnership is key in regional areas.
- Community development approach – bringing new settlers together with others in the local community (e.g. drumming and singing has brought people together in Orange and can be a non-threatening way of educating the local community); providing opportunities for new settlers to come together and support each other (e.g. sport and recreation programs for young people, mother’s groups, mentoring).
- Flexible funding to respond to mobile populations with settlement needs.
- Families moving together or being able to reunite is more likely to lead to sustainable settlement in regional areas.
- Importance of buy-in from local community, leaders, employers and other stakeholders.

Program responses

- Some changes from IHSS to HSS mean there is more flexibility for services to respond to clients who relocate. Case management plans through HEMS can be shared between service providers in cases where clients move. Although HSS services cannot be duplicated, clients can access entitlements they have not already accessed from different providers in the case of relocation.
- ACCES Services’ Rural Employment Assistance Program (REAP) – funded through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and aimed at supporting the planned relocation of humanitarian entrants from Brisbane to Biloela, and

to respond to the spontaneous settlement of humanitarian entrants in Rockhampton. The project has just been evaluated and could be a model for replication in other areas.

- In Orange, services have developed a pilot Certificate II 'Life in Australia' which is a pathway to employment. The pilot is an 18 week course and a recognised activity for JobStart.

Recommendations

- Need for leadership from Federal Government on how to embed local government in settlement services (see Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) submission in references below).
- In cases of planned secondary settlement, services need to ensure there are clear pathways into employment and stable housing.
- Need to ensure HSS and SGP funding is flexible and can respond to spontaneous settlement patterns.
- Need to ensure young people moving for employment reasons soon after arrival are able to access appropriate education and English opportunities. In particular, Afghan and Tamil young men who are working six days a week are not accessing English classes; Need to make sure there is flexible delivery of Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) in these areas.

NEXT STEPS

- Follow-up suggestions and comments from this teleconference should be forwarded to Louise Olliff in RCOA's Melbourne office, settlement@refugeecouncil.org.au
- We welcome comments and suggestions for topics for future Settlement Policy Network teleconferences, which RCOA/SCOA will be holding quarterly.

SCOA AND RCOA UPDATE

- RCOA member bulletin has just been released. More information about what RCOA has been up to and can be viewed at: www.refugeecouncil.org.au/news/bulletins.php
- *2011 Refugee Conference: Looking to the Future, Learning from the Past*, to be held 14-17 June in Sydney, and marks the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention. More information can be found: <http://refugeecon2011.arts.unsw.edu.au/>
- Refugee Week is 19-25 June – the theme is 'Freedom from Fear'. Posters designed by Shaun Tan are available for pick-up (see www.refugeeweek.org.au/resources/poster.php). For more information and to register your Refugee Week event, go to: www.refugeeweek.org.au.
- SCOA's draft strategic plan has been the subject of recent consultations, the final Strategic Plan will be ready shortly and will be circulated.
- SCOA would like to introduce their new Membership Services Officer, Laura Anderson.

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

Casey, S. (2011). *Reaping the Benefits of Migrant Settlement Planning and Co-ordination: An evaluation of the Rural Employment Assistance Program, ACCES Services, Queensland*

An evaluation of the REAP Program will be available on the ACCES Services website shortly (go to www.asi.org.au) or email annieh@asi.org.au to request a copy.

IBIS – Integration: Building Inclusive Societies

This "on-line community" is a relatively new resource showcasing international good practice around local migrant and refugee settlement and social inclusion projects. IBIS is a joint

project of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). UNAOC are currently in discussions with a range of organisations (including DIAC, SCoA, RCOA & MAV) to plan an IBIS regional launch and a one day forum in Melbourne on 7 October 2011.

www.unaoc.org/communities/migrationintegration/

LEAD – Locally Embracing & Accepting Diversity

Currently, there are two demonstration pilots in the City of Whittlesea and the Greater City of Shepparton. These involve the development of locally-based responses, all aimed at increasing acceptance of diversity and reducing discrimination. These responses will include a range of different approaches such as community awareness, community development, and supporting organisations with training and other resources.

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Programs-and-Projects/Freedom-from-discrimination/Localities-Embracing-and-Accepting-Diversity.aspx

<http://www.unaoc.org/ibis/2011/05/27/localities-embracing-and-accepting-diversity-lead-program/>

Melbourne University ARC Linkage Project – Visible Migrants and Refugees in Rural and Regional Australia

Three-year project aims to examine the interrelated social, economic and political factors that shape the resettlement experiences of recent visible migrants and refugees who live primarily in rural and regional Victoria.

www.ssps.unimelb.edu.au/research/projects/vmr

Municipal Association of Victoria (2011). *Submission to the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Multiculturalism.*

The MAV has lodged a submission to the *Inquiry into Multiculturalism in Australia* and includes recommendations on involving local councils in settlement.

[www.mav.asn.au/CA256C320013CB4B/All/934835C60BCC8E1ACA2578A00019CFF5/\\$file/Multiculturalism%20Inquiry%20Submission%203.pdf](http://www.mav.asn.au/CA256C320013CB4B/All/934835C60BCC8E1ACA2578A00019CFF5/$file/Multiculturalism%20Inquiry%20Submission%203.pdf)

National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies (2007). *Attracting and Retaining Immigrants: A toolbox of ideas for small centres*, Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, Canada.

http://integration-net.ca/english/ini/wci-idca/tbo/EN_Toolbox.pdf

Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (2011). *Family Reunion under the Humanitarian Program: Guide for Migration Agents and Volunteers*, RAILS, Brisbane.

RAILS have developed a resource for volunteers assisting people who are applying to bring family members to Australia under the offshore Humanitarian Program, and particularly as 'immediate family' members ('split family' applications). The plain English guide is designed for use by registered migration agents; community volunteers assisting in form-filling; and as a 'self-help' kit for those able to prepare their own applications.

www.rails.org.au/education/RefugeeFamilyReunionGuide.pdf

RRAC/RCOA (2010). *Annotated bibliography of Regional Settlement Reports*

www.refugeecouncil.org.au/docs/current/Regional_Settlmt_bibliography.pdf

Shepley, C. (2007). *Regional Settlement in Australia: Research into the settlement experience of humanitarian entrants in regional Australia, 2006-07*, DIAC

www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/settlement-planning/pdf/evaluation-regional-settlement-australia.pdf

Taylor-Neumann, L. V. N. and Balasingam (2009). *Sustaining Settlement in Murray Bridge, South Australia*, Lutheran Community Care

[www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Sustaining Settlement in Murray Bridge.pdf](http://www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Sustaining_Settlement_in_Murray_Bridge.pdf)

Victorian Settlement Planning Committee (2009). *Drivers and success factors in regional refugee settlement*, VSPC, Melbourne.

www.cmy.net.au/Assets/1148/1/DriversandsuccessfactorsforRuralVIC-VSPC2009.pdf