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# New South Wales Auditor-General's Report

## Performance Audit

### Settling humanitarian entrants in New South Wales

Services to permanent residents who come to New South  
Wales through the humanitarian migration stream

Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW  
Department of Premier and Cabinet

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In accordance with section 38E of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, I present a report titled **Settling humanitarian entrants in New South Wales – services to permanent residents who come to New South Wales through the humanitarian migration stream: Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Peter Achterstraat'.

**Peter Achterstraat**

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# Executive summary

## Background

Australia's immigration policy aims to balance social, economic, humanitarian and environmental objectives. Over the last ten years more than 1.5 million migrants have settled in Australia. The immigration program has two components, the Migration Program for Skilled and Family Stream migrants and the Humanitarian Program for refugees and others in humanitarian need.

Australia accepts Humanitarian Program entrants (humanitarian entrants) as a part of its responsibility to help people who have been persecuted and are in need of resettlement. Australia has signed several international conventions which set out our legal and moral obligations to protect refugees.

The Commonwealth, through its Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), determine the immigration numbers and manage the movement and settlement of people in and out of Australia. The Commonwealth also decides the initial destination of humanitarian settlement within the various States and Territories.

Of the different categories of new arrivals to Australia, those in the Humanitarian Program are some of the most vulnerable, and face many difficulties and challenges. There are two main categories within this stream. They are:

- the offshore resettlement component – people who are living in another country or in a refugee camp at the time of seeking resettlement
- the onshore/asylum component – people who apply for protection after they arrive in Australia such as irregular maritime arrivals.

This audit focused on the first group, that is, humanitarian entrants who applied for and were granted permanent residency to settle in Australia while living overseas.

Humanitarian entrants arrive in Australia from many different parts of the world. All will have suffered persecution. This may have been from arbitrary arrest, interrogation or detention, traumatic experiences such as loss of or separation from family, or even physical abuse including assault and in extreme cases, torture.

In 2010–11, the Commonwealth spent around \$390 million on post-arrival settlement services for humanitarian entrants and other eligible migrants. This typically includes individual support through the Humanitarian Settlement Services Program which consists of intensive assistance for six to 12 months. Individuals are connected to services, referred to organisations and provided with basic household goods and counselling. Some humanitarian entrants also access ongoing settlement assistance for up to five years under the Commonwealth Settlement Grants Program.

Of the 132,000 people who came to Australia through the Humanitarian Program in the last ten years, over 31,000 came to New South Wales. The NSW Government provides mainstream government services such as education, health care and transport to all residents within New South Wales, including humanitarian entrants. It must ensure that access to these services is equitable and has regard to the linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic diversity of the people of New South Wales.

This audit examined how well New South Wales responds to the settlement needs of humanitarian entrants.

## Conclusion

New South Wales is not meeting its responsibility to humanitarian entrants as well as it could. There is no overall settlement plan for New South Wales that responds to the needs of either current or expected humanitarian entrants. This means that New South Wales is not influencing the settlement of humanitarian entrants, for example by identifying where and what are the necessary supports and opportunities that will best assist humanitarian entrants to make a life in New South Wales.



To be able to plan better, New South Wales needs to collect good and useful information regarding humanitarian entrants.

The NSW Government Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee (NSW GISP) is not fulfilling its role for humanitarian entrant settlement as well as it could. The NSW GISP needs to be reinvigorated if it is to fulfil its original mandate.

Once humanitarian entrants have arrived in New South Wales, they need to be supported to settle well. Currently there is little coordination by NSW Government agencies in responding to humanitarian entrants' needs.

The Community Relations Commission For a multicultural New South Wales (CRC) is the lead NSW Government agency on multicultural affairs. All NSW Government agencies are required to report annually to the CRC on how they meet the Principles of Multiculturalism. Agency compliance with this requirement needs to improve so agencies can be held accountable.

We found that the CRC consults widely with government agencies, non-government service providers and community members, including humanitarian entrants. But it needs to strengthen its focus on humanitarian entrants. For this vulnerable group, the CRC also needs to drive accountability and coordination and be the 'go-to place' for all humanitarian issues.

## Supporting findings

In assessing New South Wales' response to the settlement needs of humanitarian entrants we examined:

- how well does New South Wales plan for the arrival and initial settlement of humanitarian entrants?
- after orientation, how well does New South Wales meet the ongoing needs of humanitarian entrants?

### How well does New South Wales plan for the arrival and initial settlement of humanitarian entrants?

New South Wales does not have an overall plan to respond to the settlement needs of current or expected humanitarian entrants. New South Wales does not currently recommend settlement locations, or undertake research into more favourable settlement locations, as other States do.

New South Wales does not currently collect or contribute any information to the Commonwealth on where humanitarian entrants may have the best opportunities to settle well, i.e. where there are employment possibilities, affordable housing, a supportive environment and appropriate services.

In 2005, the NSW GISP was established to support the NSW Government's commitment to a coordinated approach to settlement planning. The NSW GISP has not developed a plan that includes the settlement of humanitarian entrants in New South Wales.

Resettlement in New South Wales is an opportunity for humanitarian entrants to rebuild their lives in safety. However, we found that humanitarian entrants were doing less well in New South Wales than in other States on key indicators of health and housing. Barriers to successful settlement include difficulties in housing, employment, education, language services, health and family issues.

### After orientation, how well does New South Wales meet the ongoing needs of humanitarian entrants?

New South Wales does not have a coordinated approach to assisting agencies to support humanitarian entrants.

In the absence of an overall framework, there are gaps and duplication in the services provided by NSW Government agencies.

The problems humanitarian entrants are encountering are well known to the CRC, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and NSW Government agencies.

Very little information is received by New South Wales on the number, destination and background of humanitarian entrants being settled in New South Wales either prior to or after their arrival. Such information would be valuable to NSW Government agencies and other stakeholders to help them to prepare and provide appropriate services.

Agencies we spoke to told us that they need more information such as the anticipated arrival date, characteristics, needs and initial settlement location of humanitarian entrants to better plan and assist this group.

We found that the CRC has multiple consultative mechanisms. These also identify many humanitarian concerns. However, while these structures fill a gap in bringing agencies together, agencies told us they are primarily information-sharing rather than action oriented structures. A coordinated, end-to-end approach is needed to elevate and solve the concerns of the NSW Government agencies, non-government organisations and humanitarian entrants.

All NSW agencies are required to have a multicultural plan, and to report annually on how they meet the Principles of Multiculturalism in the conduct of their affairs. The Multicultural Policy and Services Program (MPSP) is the mechanism the CRC uses to report on the effectiveness of public authorities in observing the Principles of Multiculturalism. Agency compliance has varied.

Currently the MPSP report does not include results or outcomes specific to humanitarian entrants. Given the many concerns of agencies with the needs of humanitarian entrants and the services they require, CRC would be unable to readily determine the access and equity of this group for services under the current format.

## Recommendations

### Department of Premier and Cabinet and Community Relations Commission

To support permanent residents who come into New South Wales under the humanitarian migration stream, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Community Relations Commission:

1. by January 2013, ensure that the Community Relations Commission has explicit responsibility and authority for leading engagement with the Commonwealth and other stakeholders on humanitarian settlement matters (page 22)
2. by January 2013, revise the existing immigration, planning and settlement structure (the NSW Government Immigration Settlement and Planning Committee) or develop an alternate structure that has the responsibility and authority to be the central point for New South Wales to develop, coordinate and implement its statewide settlement policy and planning, including to:
  - hold agencies accountable
  - work in collaboration with the Commonwealth
  - develop partnerships with NSW local government organisations (page 22)
3. by June 2013, use the above structure to ensure humanitarian entrants are included in settlement planning at a State level (page 22).

### Community Relations Commission

To support permanent residents who come into New South Wales under the humanitarian migration stream, the Community Relations Commission:

4. by June 2013, develop, implement and publicise an information portal to become a central access point for information for:
  - local service providers to assist in planning and service delivery
  - humanitarian entrants to assist in accessing NSW Government services (page 29)
5. by January 2013, develop a 'New South Wales Card' and explore how it may best be offered to new entrants. The card is to provide information for assistance in engaging with NSW Government agencies (page 29)
6. from June 2014, for five years:
  - require all key agencies nominated by the Community Relations Commission to include a summary of current issues and outcomes for humanitarian entrants identified in the delivery of agency programs and services in their Multicultural Policies and Services Program report
  - the Community Relations Commission to publicly report on humanitarian entrant issues and outcomes in the Community Relations Report (page 29)
7. by January 2013, review the purpose and focus of:
  - the Multicultural Coordinators Forum
  - the Settlement Service Coalition
  - the Community Relations Commission Community Consultations
 and ensure that humanitarian settlement issues are elevated to the immigration, planning and settlement structure for action as required (page 29)
8. by January 2013, identify opportunities to work collaboratively with stakeholders to collect better New South Wales data on settlement outcomes, e.g. the Commonwealth's Longitudinal Survey of Refugees and other Migrants. Use the data to monitor and improve outcomes for humanitarian entrants (page 29)
9. by January 2013, improve public promotion of the responsibility of NSW Government agencies to provide interpreters (page 29).

## Response from the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Community Relations Commission



# Premier & Cabinet

Mr Peter Achterstraat  
Auditor-General  
Audit Office of NSW  
GPO Box 12  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Mr Achterstraat

Thank you for your letter of April 2012 regarding the Audit Office's Performance Audit, *Settling humanitarian entrants in NSW – services to permanent residents who come to NSW through the humanitarian migration stream* (the Audit).

Please find attached the formal response to the Audit, which incorporates the responses of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the Community Relations Commission.

The NSW Government recognises the importance of immigration to NSW, and the significance of service provision to good settlement outcomes. As such, the NSW Government thanks the Audit Office for providing the NSW Government with the opportunity to contribute to the Audit.

Yours sincerely

Chris Eccles  
Director General  
Department of Premier and Cabinet

Stepan Kerkyasharian  
Chairperson  
Community Relations Commission



The Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Community Relations Commission's  
Response to Auditor-General's Report  
Performance Audit: Settling Humanitarian Entrants in NSW

### **Executive Summary**

The Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and the Community Relations Commission (CRC) jointly reviewed the Audit Office's Report findings and recommendations. Generally, DPC and the CRC are concerned that the Report's findings misrepresent the role of NSW in the settlement of humanitarian entrants.

The Report does not satisfactorily differentiate between planning for humanitarian settlement (a Commonwealth responsibility) and delivery of services to humanitarian entrants (a shared Commonwealth and State responsibility). In addition, a number of the findings within the Report are not supported by recent evaluations and literature. Data contained in the Report is not well presented, and DPC and the CRC believe that this detrimentally misrepresents humanitarian settlement outcomes, which are generally acknowledged within the literature to be positive in comparison to other overseas jurisdictions. Further, there appears to be a logical gap between the findings of the Report and its recommendations.

Given the respective Constitutional responsibilities, the size of the cohort concerned, and the limited ability of the NSW Government to influence humanitarian settlement placements and movements; DPC and the CRC does not support the general direction of the Report's recommendations.

However, DPC and the CRC will commit to a broad review of the NSW Government Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee (the Committee), as well as seeking to improve information flows between the Commonwealth and NSW to assist in coordinating and improving the delivery of services to this very vulnerable group of NSW citizens.

### **Response to Findings**

#### ***Settlement Planning***

A key finding of the Report is that there is no settlement plan for NSW, that NSW is not influencing the settlement of humanitarian entrants, and that the Committee should be fulfilling this role.

The Report fails to adequately acknowledge that immigration is the Commonwealth's constitutional responsibility stemming from Section 51 (xxvii) of the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act*. Under this power, the Commonwealth manages the movement and settlement of people in and out of Australia. This includes determining immigration numbers (overall and by country), the location of unlinked humanitarian migrants who arrive in Australia, and supporting humanitarian settlement in Australia (from both offshore and onshore).

According to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship 9,236<sup>1</sup> offshore humanitarian migrants arrived in Australia in 2009/10. As indicated in the Report, only 20% of offshore humanitarian entrants arrive in Australia without either a sponsor or a link to family or friends (other estimates put this proportion even lower). This amounts to approximately 1800 people nationally. Based on historic trends, only a third of these, or roughly 600 people in

<sup>1</sup> Department of Immigration and Citizenship – Australia's Humanitarian Program, Information Paper, April 2011.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Community Relations Commission's  
 Response to Auditor-General's Report  
 Performance Audit: Settling Humanitarian Entrants in NSW

total, would have been placed by the Commonwealth in a location in NSW, and linked to services to enable them to settle. The balance of humanitarian entrants to NSW, settle in locations determined by their sponsors, or in accordance with the existing location of family or friends.

This compares with 144,100 total overseas arrivals in NSW in 2010.<sup>2</sup>

DPC and the CRC do not support the contention that NSW should have a settlement plan to specifically influence the settlement of this small number of humanitarian entrants. First, the cohort whose settlement could be influenced is very small, only 600 people out of a total of around 144,000 migrants annually. Second, the State's ability to influence the placement decision is significantly constrained as the Commonwealth has principal constitutional responsibility in this area.

However, DPC and the CRC would be entirely supportive of the Commonwealth agreeing to a formal consultation process prior to settlement-decision making, and to the timely provision of data on the proposed numbers, location and capacity of humanitarian entrants. While it is acknowledged that the Office of the Auditor-General is restricted in making recommendations with respect to the Commonwealth, such a measure would greatly assist the NSW Government to provide better outcomes when humanitarian entrants arrive. DPC and the CRC believe this is a critical missing element for improving service delivery and planning, and notes that the Report highlights this was a key concern of NSW Government Agencies during consultation.

### ***Outcomes for Humanitarian Entrants***

A supporting finding of the Report is that, on key indicators, NSW was doing less well than other states.

The data used to support this contention is not compared against equivalent data relating to outcomes experienced in the broader community. For example, Exhibit 9 illustrates English language, Employment, Health and Housing outcomes for humanitarian entrants, but does not provide comparative information for the broader population.

More critically, recent reviews and research have concluded that "state of residence has little overall impact on the settlement experience. State experiences vary somewhat, but generally similar patterns prevail."<sup>3</sup>

The Report also paints a poor picture of humanitarian entrant outcomes over the five year horizon. Again, reference to recent research would have identified that generally migrants (of all categories, not just humanitarian entrants) often experience significant improvement in housing, employment, and education outcomes over more extended timeframes, e.g. 5 to 10 years.<sup>4</sup>

This is a reasonable proposition when it is considered that acquiring English language proficiency sufficient to meet educational prerequisites can take several years, that

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue 1367.0 State and Territory Statistical Indicators 2012

<sup>3</sup> DIAC Settlement Outcomes April 2011, Australian Survey Research

<sup>4</sup> DIAC Settlement Outcomes April 2011, Australian Survey Research



The Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Community Relations Commission's  
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subsequent training can also take a number of years to complete and that improved outcomes are only likely after both of these objectives are achieved.

It should also be noted that within NSW, all residents, including humanitarian entrants, are eligible to access government initiatives and services. This is reinforced by legislation through the *Communities Relations Commission and Principals of Multiculturalism Act 2000*, with a requirement that such services are publicly reported through the Multicultural Policies and Services Program.

***Ongoing Needs of Humanitarian Entrants***

The remaining finding of the Report relates to NSW's approach to supporting humanitarian entrants. This is an area of particular interest to DPC and the CRC, and could have benefited from greater focus within the Report.

DPC and the CRC accept that services to humanitarian entrants could be better coordinated, that the responsibilities of respective Commonwealth and State agencies could be better articulated and managed through collaborative mechanisms, such as a reconfigured Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee.

These are areas where the NSW Government does have some ability to influence and determine outcomes for humanitarian entrants after their arrival in NSW. As such, it is disappointing that the Report makes very few findings or recommendations in this area. For example, anecdotal advice suggests that many of the service delivery challenges that arise for humanitarian entrants arise not from their initial placement, which the Audit focuses on almost exclusively, but as a result of secondary movements to alternate locations.

***What DPC and the CRC will do***

DPC and the CRC will review the composition of the NSW Government Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee and its Terms of Reference (TOR) to ensure that it has the responsibility and authority to be the central point for developing and implementing settlement policy and planning in NSW. This review will consider:

- developing a process to monitor and respond to humanitarian entrant settlement issues;
- seeking formal partnerships with the Commonwealth, NSW local government organisations and other relevant stakeholders ; and
- ensuring that service provision is coordinated, planned and transparent.

The CRC, as the co-ordinating agency, will also formally request that the Commonwealth provide regular data on humanitarian entrants, including statistics about intending humanitarian entrants and information about any planned release of asylum seekers from detention. This information will greatly assist NSW in planning service provision.

## Comment by the Auditor-General on agency response to the audit

### Settlement planning

I note in my report that the Commonwealth has the constitutional responsibility for immigration.

The point that I am seeking to make is that New South Wales needs to identify the necessary opportunities and support that will best assist humanitarian entrants to make a life here by:

- working in collaboration with the Commonwealth
- holding agencies accountable
- developing partnerships with NSW local government organisations.

### Outcomes for humanitarian entrants

The response states that my report does not provide comparative information for the broader population. I stand by the information in my report and I consider that it contains the most relevant comparisons, namely to outcomes of other migration streams and other States.

### Recommendations

I am pleased to note that despite the differences of opinion noted above, the response indicates substantial agreement with my recommendations.

In particular I note that “DPC and the CRC will commit to a broader review of the NSW Government Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee (the Committee) as well as seeking to improve information flows between the Commonwealth and NSW to assist in coordinating and improving the delivery of services to this very vulnerable group of NSW citizens”. I agree with the DPC and CRC that this information will greatly assist New South Wales in planning service provision.

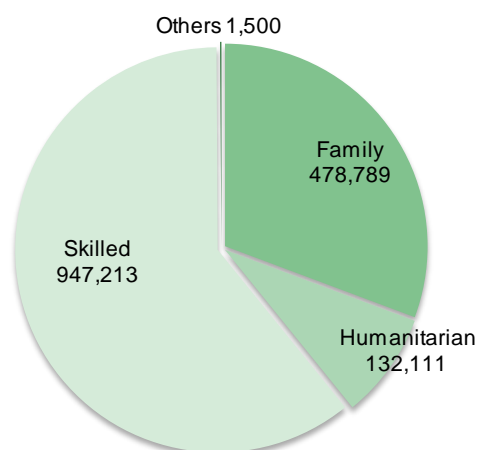
# Introduction

## 1. Background – Settling humanitarian entrants in New South Wales

### 1.1 Who is a humanitarian entrant or a refugee?

In the last ten years, over 1.5 million people settled in various parts of Australia. They come to Australia under several migration categories.

#### Exhibit 1: Migration by category over the last ten years



Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012.

In the last decade, humanitarian entrants have made up almost nine per cent of all migration into Australia. There are two main categories:

- the offshore resettlement component – people who are living in another country or in a refugee camp at the time of seeking resettlement
- the onshore/asylum component – people who apply for protection after they arrive in Australia, such as irregular maritime arrivals.

This audit focuses on the first of these; humanitarian entrants who were granted permanent residency to settle in Australia while living overseas. They are eligible for government support and services immediately on arrival. One part of this group are the Special Humanitarian Program entrants, who have links with people in Australia who are willing to sponsor them. As NSW Government agencies do not distinguish this category when providing services, some of our findings also relate to this group.

We excluded those entrants who apply for humanitarian entrant status while in Australia, e.g. irregular maritime arrivals and those who have overstayed their visas.

Humanitarian entrants are people who have been persecuted in their own country and are in great need of resettlement. They may have been persecuted because of:

- race
- nationality
- religion
- membership of a particular social group or for political opinions they hold.

Persecution involves:

- harassment such as arbitrary arrests, interrogation and detention
- traumatic experiences such as loss of or separation from family
- physical abuse including assault and in extreme cases, torture.

Humanitarian entrants made up almost nine per cent of all migration into Australia over the last decade

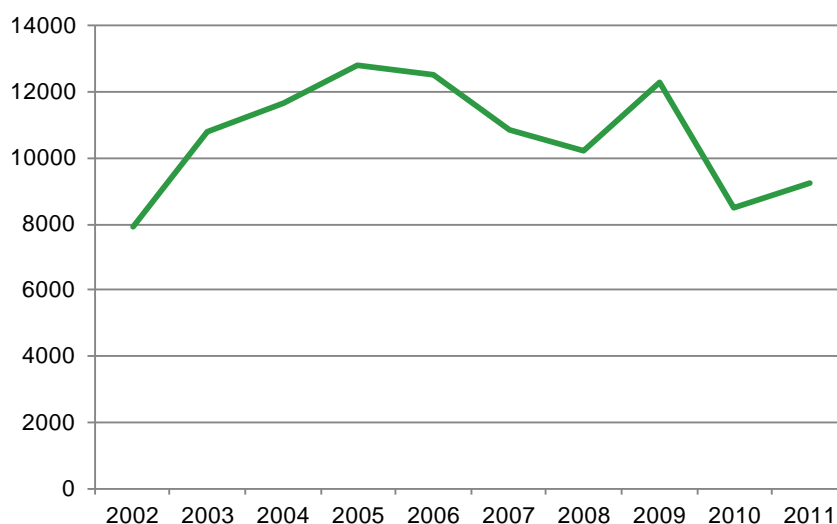


Australia is one of the top three resettlement countries in the world

Humanitarian entrants come into Australia under five major visa categories. These are outlined in Appendix 1.

Over the last ten years, around 80 per cent of all humanitarian entrants who have settled in Australia were from the offshore component. They represent over 50 different nationalities. There has been a relatively stable number of humanitarian entrants accepted by Australia.

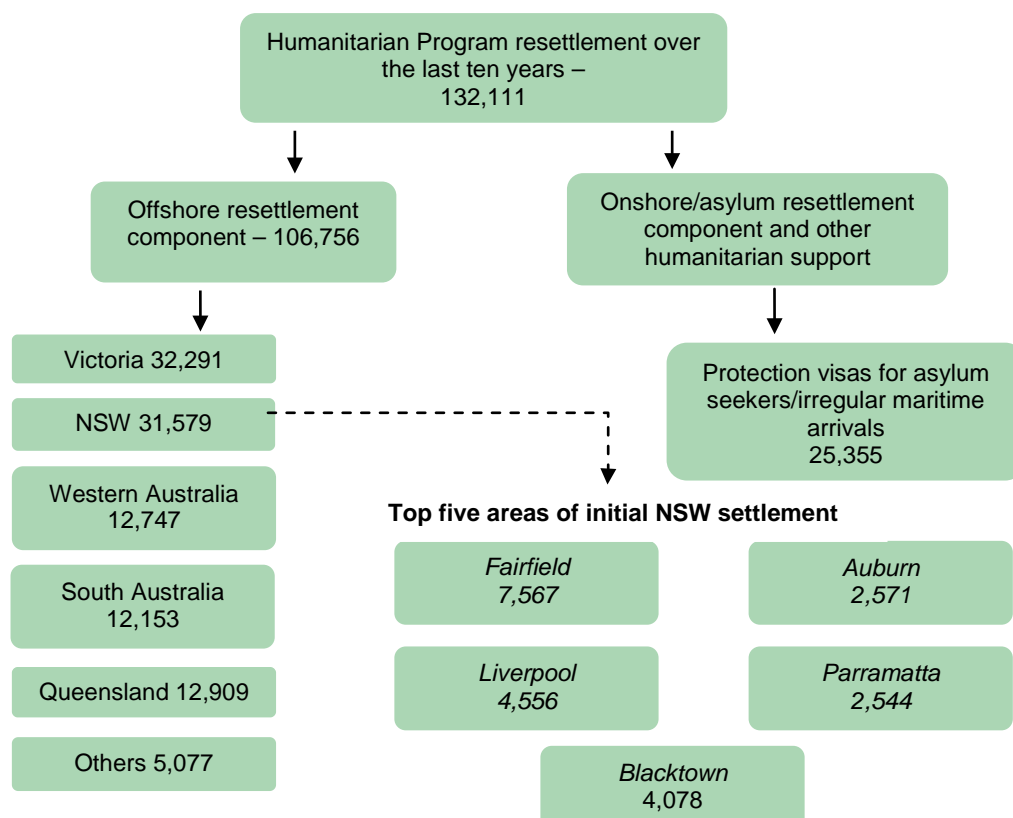
**Exhibit 2: Offshore humanitarian entrants into Australia over the last ten years**



Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012.

Australia has consistently ranked as one of the top three resettlement countries in the world.

**Exhibit 3: Humanitarian settlement in Australia and New South Wales over the last ten years**



Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012.

New South Wales is the second largest settlement location in Australia for humanitarian entrants from Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, Burma, Iran, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. Over half of recent humanitarian entrants have settled in five local government areas.

Humanitarian entrants generally come into New South Wales with many needs as a result of their past experiences.

Some humanitarian entrants told their stories:

I walked three months from Sudan to Ethiopia ... I saw colleagues, friends and family die along the journey, we had no access to food, no water, no medical assistance, no security. There was a lot of fear, if you don't walk hard you die. Girls were killed and raped by soldiers. By the time we got to Ethiopia we were skeletons ... we looked like skeletons.

Source: 'We have a voice – hear us', The settlement experiences of refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa, The Centre for Refugee Research, UNSW, 2009.

We left with nothing. No food, no plate, no bed, no clothes, no house. I look at my journey like a mountain and a river. It has been an incredible journey. That's why I pray for the Government of Australia and the people of Australia because they saved my life.

Source: 'Hear our calls for action', Dialogues with women from refugee backgrounds in Australia, The Centre for Refugee Research, UNSW, 2011.

The settlement experience for humanitarian entrants can be a very difficult time. Homesickness, isolation and culture shock affect their ability to start a new life in New South Wales. Many have extremely traumatic pasts.

They may have:

- experienced high levels of poverty
- low levels of formal education
- lost or have been separated from family members, often in violent circumstances
- suffered from the effects of torture and trauma
- distrust of authority
- physical and mental health issues
- low levels or no knowledge of English
- uncertainty about the future.

Humanitarian entrants have often spent many years in refugee camps (some up to 15 years) with limited protection. For some humanitarian entrants, particularly children, the refugee camp environment is the only one they have ever known.

Humanitarian entrants coming into New South Wales often have little understanding about Australia and its community. They have had little opportunity to prepare themselves physically or psychologically for their new life. Many have never rented a house, paid a bill, gone to work or dealt with banks, real estate agents or government departments. However, they have chosen to resettle in Australia because their human rights have been violated and they are seeking a future where these rights will be respected.

## 1.2 Initial arrival of humanitarian entrants

The overall responsibility for meeting human rights obligations rests with government. In Australia, the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments are accountable for upholding these obligations.

The Commonwealth, through its Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), manages the movement and settlement of people in and out of Australia. This includes supporting humanitarian settlement within the various States and Territories.

Many  
humanitarian  
entrants have  
extremely  
traumatic pasts

There is a  
common but  
mistaken belief  
that the  
Commonwealth  
has sole  
responsibility for  
humanitarian  
entrants

Before they are brought to Australia, the DIAC consults with humanitarian entrants regarding their initial settlement locations – including which State or Territory and where within the State or Territory. The decision of where to settle is influenced by whether humanitarian entrants have any family or close links in a particular State and region, or where sponsors are located. About 20 per cent of humanitarian entrants come to Australia without any links.

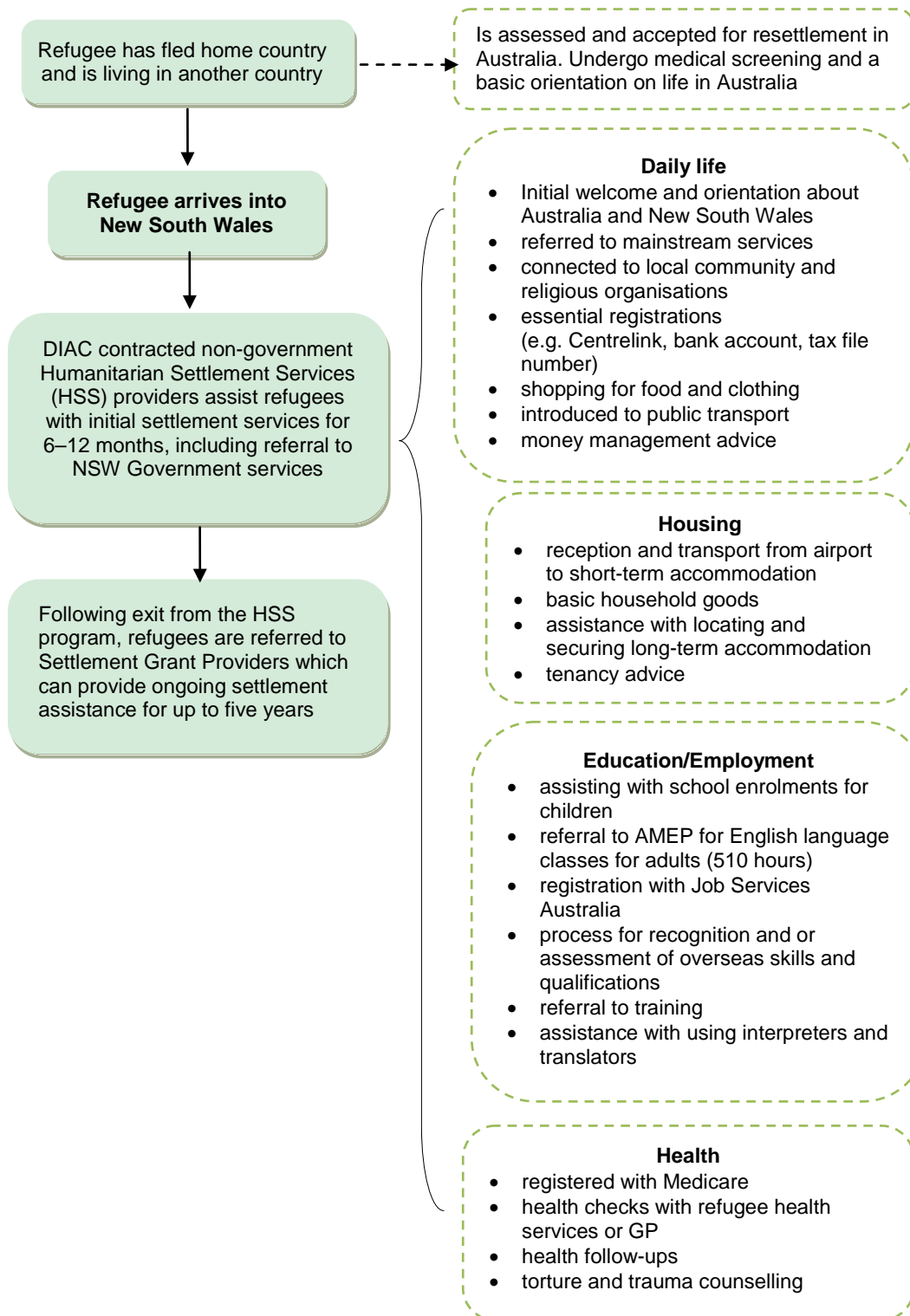
Through its Humanitarian Settlement Services program, the DIAC provides pre and post arrival support to humanitarian entrants. These services are outsourced to contractors who provide coordinated case management, arrange accommodation, household goods and other services for their clients. Services that humanitarian entrants are linked to include, schools, refugee health centres, hospitals, public transport and public housing.

In 2010–11, the Commonwealth spent around \$390 million on post arrival settlement services for humanitarian entrants and other eligible migrants. This does not include the cost of services provided by State Government agencies.

There is a common but mistaken belief that the Commonwealth has sole responsibility for humanitarian entrants. In fact, from initial settlement humanitarian entrants are reliant upon many services provided by NSW Government agencies.

We found that New South Wales does not report specifically on expenditure relating to humanitarian entrants. However, we understand New South Wales incurs considerable expenditure on general services including health, language, education, housing and transport services. It also incurs expense for specific services. For example in 2011–12, NSW Health allocated \$1.5 million to enhance Refugee Health services and improve health outcomes for refugees who settle in New South Wales. Understanding and accessing these services well directly impacts on humanitarian entrants' settlement experiences.

## Exhibit 4: Commonwealth assistance to refugees resettling in Australia



Note: Humanitarian entrants coming into Australia under the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) are supported by proposers. Proposers typically provide considerable settlement support to SHP entrants, reducing the need for Commonwealth funded settlement services. Nonetheless, SHP entrants remain eligible for Commonwealth and NSW Government services on a needs basis.

Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012.

The Community Relations Commission is the lead NSW Government agency on multicultural affairs

1.3 New South Wales' commitment to humanitarian entrants

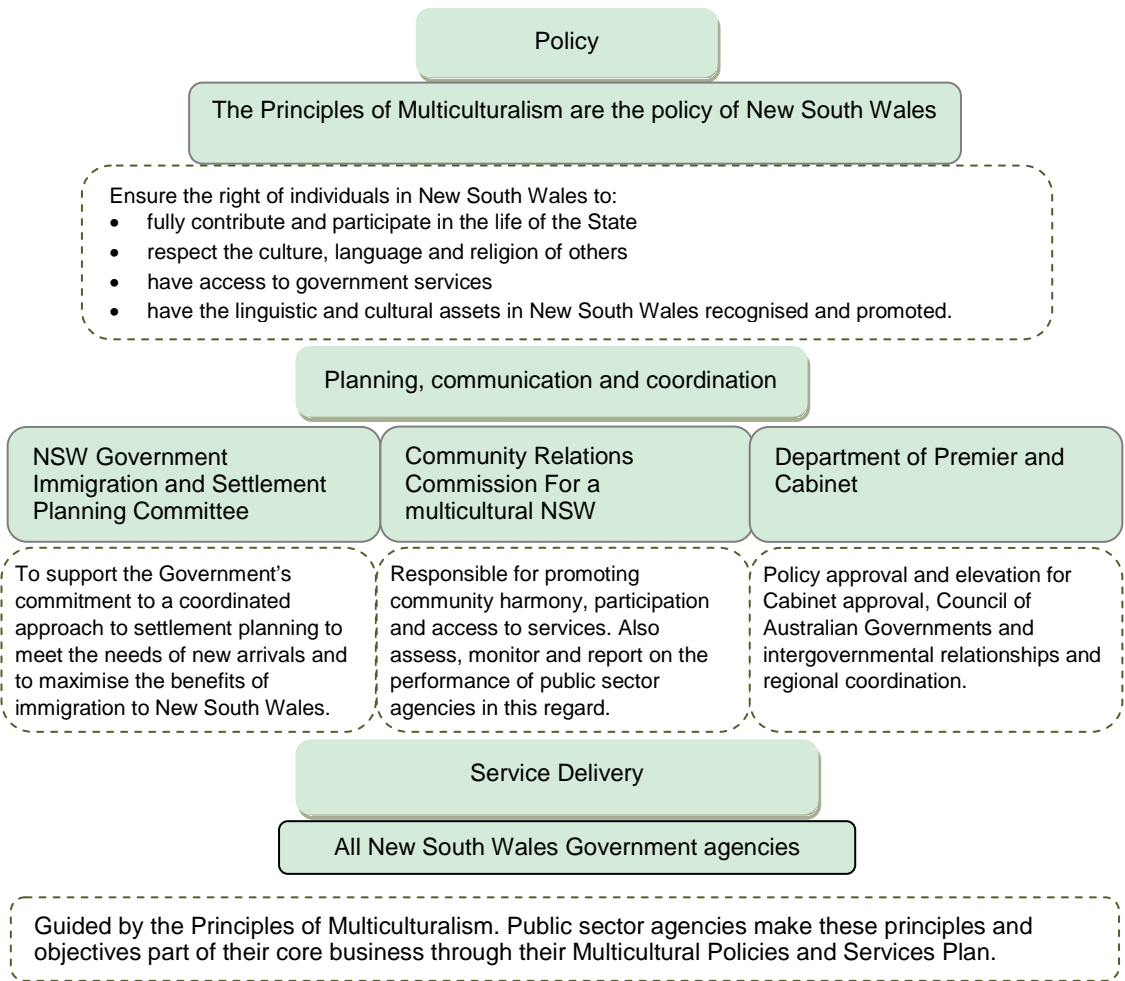
New South Wales' responsibility for humanitarian entrants falls within the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*. Since the late 1970s, New South Wales has had a multicultural policy for agencies to facilitate the equal participation of all in the social, economic and political system of New South Wales. This was a response to growing public concern that minority groups were being ignored, isolated from the remainder of the community and looked upon with suspicion and distrust.

In the Second Reading speech for the Ethnic Affairs Commission Bill in 1979, the then Premier said:

We want to eliminate defects in the participation of minorities in the political, social and economic structures of the nation and to pursue actively programs to rectify existing imbalances.

As the lead NSW Government agency on multicultural affairs, the CRC engages with the community, public and private sectors in providing direct services and advice to enable equal participation and promote community harmony. It has a key role in the New South Wales response to humanitarian entrants. Direct responsibility for humanitarian entrants is not specifically assigned to any one NSW Government agency, however all agencies must meet the Principles of Multiculturalism.

Exhibit 5: Mechanism operating in New South Wales to respond to humanitarian entrants



Source: Audit Office research.

In 2010–11, the CRC's total income was \$18.7 million. \$13.1 million was from government appropriation and \$5 million was from user charges for translation and interpreter services.



# Key findings

## 2. How well does New South Wales plan for the arrival and initial settlement of humanitarian entrants?

### 2.1 Does New South Wales have a plan for humanitarian entrant settlement?

New South Wales does not have an overall plan to respond to the settlement needs of either current or expected humanitarian entrants. New South Wales does not currently recommend settlement locations, or undertake research into more favourable settlement locations, as other States do.

The Commonwealth has a process by which it selects settlement locations for humanitarian entrants. On occasion New South Wales has, at the request of the Commonwealth, provided input. However, New South Wales does not have a proactive engagement in this process. This means that New South Wales is not influencing the settlement of humanitarian entrants where it could, for example, by identifying where and what are the necessary supports and opportunities that will best assist humanitarian entrants to make a life in New South Wales.

In 2009, the Commonwealth reported on the current state of strategic planning at the State and Territory level in regard to Australia's anticipated population growth. Only South Australia and Victoria had policies for overseas migration that included humanitarian entrants. New South Wales does not have any such policy to date.

In 2005, the NSW GISP was established to support the government's commitment to a coordinated approach to settlement planning. It aimed to meet the needs of new arrivals and to maximise the benefits of immigration to New South Wales. In 2011, the NSW State Migration Plan came into effect. Its development was coordinated by the NSW GISP. This plan applies to skilled migration. The NSW GISP has not developed a plan that includes the settlement of humanitarian entrants in New South Wales.

The Commonwealth Government has shown a commitment to resettling humanitarian entrants in regional areas. Those without strong ties to family or friends already in Australia may be influenced to settle in regional areas.

New South Wales does not have an explicit regional settlement plan for humanitarian entrants, although:

- the NSW 2021 State Plan has set a goal to increase the population in regional New South Wales by 470,000 by 2036
- New South Wales has a regional network of government agencies. It is coordinated and supported by the Department of Premier and Cabinet Regional Coordinators. Network members hold valuable information on local community opportunities and challenges.

In New South Wales, from 2004 to 2011, over 2,800 humanitarian entrants settled in regional areas.

#### Exhibit 6: Some regional humanitarian entrant settlement in New South Wales: 2004–11

Area	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Albury	1	–	3	15	33	71	77	83	283
Coffs Harbour	34	55	48	73	66	71	131	84	562
Goulburn Mulwaree	8	5	6	3	42	8	35	1	108
Lismore	16	13	14	3	13	16	18	–	93
Newcastle	123	128	51	64	49	45	83	72	615
Wagga Wagga	41	57	66	59	6	34	32	19	314
Wollongong	50	55	48	87	67	145	117	87	656

Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012.

New South Wales does not have an overall plan to respond to the settlement needs of humanitarian entrants

New South Wales does not currently collect or contribute any information to the Commonwealth on where humanitarian entrants may have the best opportunities to settle well, i.e. where there are employment possibilities, affordable housing, a supportive environment and appropriate services.

## 2.2 Is there a clear responsibility for planning and coordinating humanitarian entrant settlement across New South Wales, and is information shared?

The NSW GISP has the responsibility to fully address settlement planning issues in New South Wales, coordinate the development of New South Wales policy and positions on settlement issues and to effectively represent New South Wales at the Commonwealth level. This includes a specific obligation to monitor and assess the impact of humanitarian migration in New South Wales.

The NSW GISP membership was to be senior departmental representatives of major agencies. There was also to be a direct line of communication between the NSW GISP representative and staff involved in immigration and settlement issues within the various NSW Government agencies. Refer to Appendix 2 for further details.

Over the last seven years, the NSW GISP has contributed to keeping committee members informed on Commonwealth and State policy developments and has coordinated responses to common issues across agencies, such as the review of the Commonwealth's Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy and protocols for humanitarian entrants whose date of birth is unknown.

However, we found that over time the direction of the NSW GISP has not matched its terms of reference, and there is now confusion as to whether its purpose and function is more than an information sharing network. Issues include:

- the 2005 Premier's Memorandum which established the committee is no longer published on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website
- information shared in the NSW GISP does not reach the relevant staff in the member agencies
- the NSW GISP tends to respond to issues that arise and share information, but does not have an active strategic direction or agenda for humanitarian entrants
- attendance at the NSW GISP by member agencies has been irregular, representatives frequently change and the seniority of representation has reduced in many instances. Although participating agencies were selected because of the significance of settlement issues to their business, one agency attended only 25 per cent of meetings over the past three years.

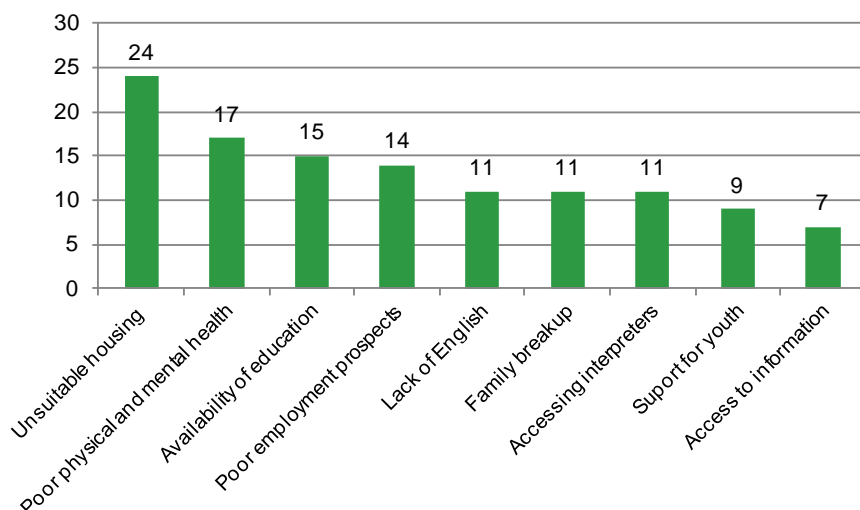
While the NSW GISP was constituted and given clear responsibilities for planning and coordination with the Commonwealth and State agencies for migration, including humanitarian entrants, it does not appear to be fulfilling this role as it could.

In the absence of a coordinated approach to planning, New South Wales has limited influence over the humanitarian entrant settlement process.

## 2.3 How well are humanitarian entrants settling in New South Wales?

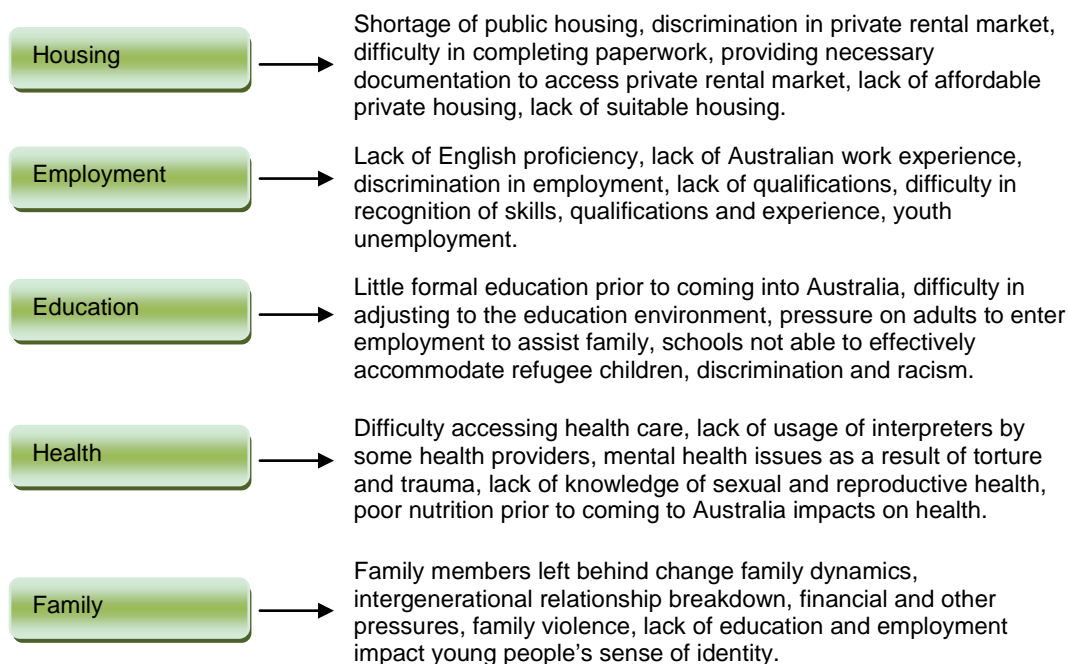
Resettlement in New South Wales is an opportunity for humanitarian entrants to rebuild their lives in safety. However, we found that New South Wales does not meet the needs of many humanitarian entrants as they suffer ongoing disadvantage. During the audit we held around 40 meetings with stakeholders. These included NSW Government agencies and non-government organisations. Many participants were service providers. Common themes of disadvantage were raised.

The NSW  
GISP does  
not appear to  
be fulfilling its  
role

**Exhibit 7: Number of times specific areas of disadvantage were raised by stakeholders**

Source: Audit Office research.

There are various factors that contribute to poor settlement experiences. Even after many years humanitarian entrants in New South Wales can still face many barriers.

**Exhibit 8: Reported barriers to successful settlement**

Source: Audit Office research.

In 2011 DIAC conducted a survey on settlement outcomes of new arrivals. It intended to gauge how humanitarian entrants settled during their first five years in Australia. Over 5,300 humanitarian entrants responded to the survey of which over 1,700 were from New South Wales. This survey showed that even after being in New South Wales for up to five years, humanitarian entrants still struggled in various areas. In particular those settled in New South Wales were doing less well than in other States on key indicators of health and housing.

Various factors  
contribute to a  
poor settlement  
experience

Even after being  
 in New South  
 Wales for up to  
 five years,  
 humanitarian  
 entrants are still  
 struggling

## Exhibit 9: Settlement outcomes in New South Wales of humanitarian entrants for the first five years

	NSW respondents	Average of all respondents in other states
<b>English language</b>		
Do not speak English well or at all	52%	51%
Do not read English well or at all	48%	50%
Do not write English well or at all	56%	56%
Have not attained any new qualification since being in Australia	63%	61%
<b>Employment</b>		
Find it hard or sometimes hard to access job services	29%	28%
Centrelink payments received by a household member*	84%	87%
Work for wage or salary	22%	25%
Study full-time	15%	23%
Unemployed and looking for work	12%	11%
Unemployed for six months or more	11%	7%
<b>Health</b>		
Poor physical health	19%	12%
Poor mental health	13%	7%
<b>Housing</b>		
Somewhat happy or not happy with the size of the place they live in	46%	35%
Find it difficult to find a place	46%	38%
Paying rent	86%	79%

\*Centrelink payments are not only unemployment benefits but also include Youth Allowance, Austudy and child care rebates.

Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship: Settlement outcomes of new arrivals, 2011.

When humanitarian entrants are not well settled, there are social and economic impacts. Social impacts include frustration, depression and unhappiness. The recent DIAC survey found humanitarian entrants reported significantly lower levels of happiness than family and skilled migrants.

Research shows that humanitarian entrants continue to be frustrated that their skills, experience and motivation to work are not fully appreciated even after many years.

Unemployment and under-employment also present major barriers to successful humanitarian entrant resettlement. Research shows that humanitarian entrants have a lower level of workforce participation than either the Australian-born, or other types of migrant settlers. Humanitarian entrants who are working also have considerably lower incomes than other migrant streams. A recent DIAC survey found only around three per cent earn over \$62,600.

**Exhibit 10: Settlement outcomes in Australia by migration stream for the first five years**

	Humanitarian migrants	Skilled migrants	Family migrants
Receive Centrelink payments	85%	28%	39%
Used interpreter or translator service	44%	4%	13%
Annual income is above \$62,605	3%	39%	17%
Are paying rent	81%	49%	36%
Employed (eg wage or salary, own business, work and study)	31%	84%	50%
Of those employed:			
labourers	44%	5%	18%
clerical and administrative workers	5%	13%	16%

Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship: Settlement outcomes of new arrivals, 2011.

These impacts represent a significant loss to the Australian labour market and economy in terms of under-utilised skills and resources.

## 2.4 The benefits of successful settlement

There are many benefits when humanitarian entrants settle well and can contribute fully to New South Wales. Research shows that the contributions of humanitarian entrants are substantial despite the fact that as a group they experience greater difficulty in adjusting to life in Australia than other migrant groups.

Humanitarian entrants are often keen to make up for lost time and take up the many diverse opportunities provided by New South Wales. Research shows that humanitarian entrants make substantial contributions in the areas of:

- increasing markets for local goods and opening new markets
- bringing in new skills
- offsetting the effects of the ageing population including:
  - being the youngest of all the immigrations streams coming into Australia
  - most spend their entire working lives in Australia
  - children complete their training and their working lives in Australia
- creating employment and filling empty employment niches
- assisting in meeting the national problem of labour shortage in rural and regional areas
- enhancing multiculturalism.

Also, humanitarian entrants are often entrepreneurial as they face the need to set up and establish themselves in a new environment. They have a greater propensity to be owner/operators of a business than other immigrant groups and the Australia-born.

The 2000 Business Review Weekly's annual 'Rich 200' list showed that five of Australia's eight billionaires were people whose families had originally come to the country as refugees.

Source: Refugee Council of Australia, 2010.

There are many benefits when humanitarian entrants settle well



Over time  
humanitarian  
entrants make a  
significant  
contribution to  
the wider  
society and  
economy

## Exhibit 11: Motivation and contribution of humanitarian entrants

A Congolese-born refugee arrived in Australia in 2005. Within a few years of being in Australia this person:

- is undertaking a Bachelor of Communications and Media Studies and Bachelor of Commerce
- had completed a freelance journalism course at the age of 16 and has published several articles
- is an active member of the community, is a caseworker for refugee families and radio co-host
- is a tutor for international students, youth motivational speaker and member of various community bodies
- has received awards and recognition for leadership, young volunteer of the year and young citizen of the year.

Source: Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia, 2012.

Research shows that the initial years of humanitarian resettlement are often difficult and intensive in the use of government provided support services. The circumstances of their migration make this inevitable. However, over time there is a strong pattern of not only economic and social adjustment but also of significant contribution to the wider society and economy.

### Recommendations

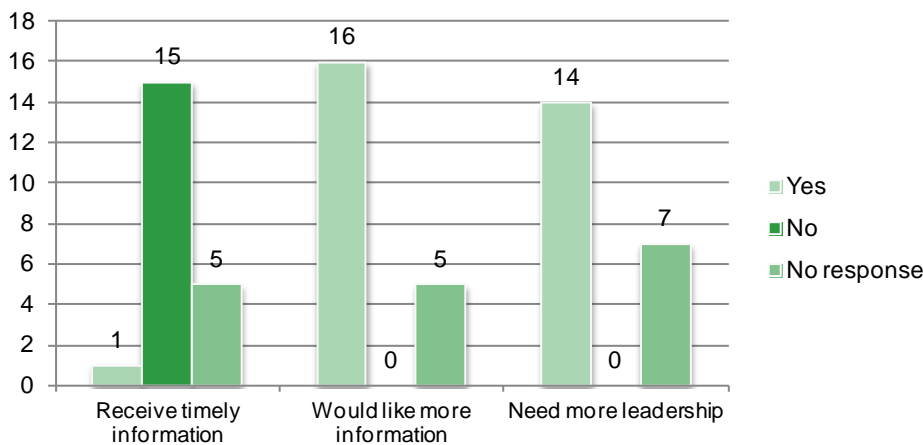
1. By January 2013, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Community Relations Commission ensure that the Community Relations Commission has explicit responsibility and authority for leading engagement with the Commonwealth and other stakeholders on humanitarian settlement matters
2. By January 2013, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Community Relations Commission revise the existing immigration, planning and settlement structure (the NSW Government Immigration Settlement and Planning Committee) or develop an alternate structure that has the responsibility and authority to be the central point for New South Wales to develop, coordinate and implement its statewide settlement policy and planning, including to:
  - hold agencies accountable
  - work in collaboration with the Commonwealth
  - develop partnerships with NSW local government organisations
3. We recommend that the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Community Relations Commission by June 2013 use the above structure to ensure humanitarian entrants are included in settlement planning at a State level.

### 3. After orientation, how well does New South Wales meet the ongoing needs of humanitarian entrants?

#### 3.1 Is information to assist the settlement of humanitarian entrants shared?

The majority of NSW Government agencies we met with felt they did not get timely information about humanitarian entrant settlement into their area, and wanted more information sharing and leadership in managing their response to humanitarian entrants.

## Exhibit 12: Views from NSW Government agencies on adequacy of current available information



Source: Audit Office research.

During the audit, we found the problems humanitarian entrants are encountering are well known to the CRC, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the NSW Government agencies.

Very little information is received by New South Wales on the number, destination and background of humanitarian entrants being settled in New South Wales either prior to, or after their arrival. Such information would be valuable to NSW Government agencies and other stakeholders to help them to prepare and provide appropriate services.

Agencies we spoke to told us that they need more information, such as the anticipated arrival date, characteristics, needs and initial settlement location of humanitarian entrants to better plan and assist this group.

Our consultations revealed that it is common for government agencies to receive no information, until the humanitarian entrants themselves present to service providers. The CRC has had arrangements in the past to receive information from the DIAC, but in recent times this information has not been readily available.

NSW Government agencies have previously provided the Commonwealth with details of New South Wales settlement needs. This includes:

- the location of their services
- the specific community/target group for their services
- category of need or issue
- how the Commonwealth's Settlement Grants Program could be used to address the issue
- what other solutions could respond to the issue or barrier.

This process has been coordinated by the CRC, but this information is not used to drive any planning process in New South Wales.

### 3.2 Do current mechanisms resolve issues faced by agencies and humanitarian entrants and support access to services?

We found that the CRC has multiple consultative mechanisms. These identify many humanitarian concerns. However, while these structures fill a gap in bringing agencies together, agencies told us they are primarily information-sharing rather than action-oriented structures. A coordinated, end-to-end approach is needed to elevate and solve the concerns of the NSW Government agencies, non-government organisations and humanitarian entrants.

The CRC has the responsibility for consulting, coordinating and reporting on multicultural issues, including those of humanitarian entrants.

NSW agencies need more information on humanitarian entrants to better plan and assist them

NSW agencies we spoke to are grappling with the many and diverse issues that confront humanitarian entrants, and how best to respond.

In order to assist government agencies and non-government organisations and to keep abreast with issues including the settlement of humanitarian entrants, the CRC has several organised forums:

Multicultural Coordinators Forum	<p>Formed in 2009, multicultural coordinators from over 30 NSW Government agencies are invited to each forum. The forums were designed for multicultural planners and practitioners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• network with one another</li> <li>• discuss issues that may be common across the public sector</li> <li>• share information about developments in the field of multiculturalism</li> <li>• seek the opinions of colleagues with a diverse range of expertise and field experience</li> <li>• identify new project areas.</li> </ul> <p>Humanitarian entrant issues raised include the NSW Refugee Health Plan.</p>
Settlement Services Coalition	<p>Is a network of organisations providing settlement services to humanitarian entrants. The coalition is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve coordination, cooperation and communication between NSW Government agencies and non-government organisations working with migrants, including humanitarian entrants</li> <li>• enable settlement workers to raise issues of concern and advocate for their clients on a State level and provide input into service delivery, policy development and community programs with a New South Wales State focus.</li> </ul> <p>Humanitarian entrant issues raised include employment and housing for women.</p>
Regional Advisory Councils (RACs)	<p>These are local groups of community and government representatives established by the CRC to discuss issues affecting the culturally diverse community in regional New South Wales. There are ten RACs located across New South Wales. They are convened by appointed Commissioners, and meet quarterly.</p> <p>Humanitarian entrant issues raised include programs for youth.</p>
Annual CRC Symposium	<p>The two day event is attended by community organisations, ethnic and religious groups, settlement service providers, ethnic media agencies, local councils and NSW Government agencies. The symposium aims to share information on community and government projects, and to build networks and share ideas.</p> <p>Humanitarian entrant issues raised include support for refugee students.</p>

We found that:

- participants of the Multicultural Coordinators Forum wanted these to be active as well as informative. The CRC is currently developing Terms of Reference for this forum which aims to facilitate a greater strategic direction and enable the group to explore issues with a stronger mandate
- although in 2010 members of the Settlement Services Coalition identified over 35 migrant and refugee networks in New South Wales which could be part of the coalition, only about five to ten service providers regularly attend these meetings
- the CRC has only one regional coordinator to support all the RACs. Stakeholders felt this may limit its effectiveness to resolve issues outside of metropolitan Sydney.

Agencies want  
existing  
structures to be  
more action-  
oriented

Apart from these the CRC also consults directly with the community. This gives humanitarian entrants and other groups the opportunity to raise issues of concern and emerging problems.

From December 2009 to August 2011 the CRC conducted nine community consultations. Community members and representatives from various organisations attended.

**Exhibit 13: Community Relations Commission community consultation**

	Number of attendees	Participation of humanitarian entrant community members	Humanitarian entrant concerns
Blacktown	50	Yes	Youth issues, domestic violence, discrimination, unemployment, housing
Liverpool	20+	Yes	Language, youth services
Auburn	30+	Yes	Language, school failure, housing, employment, lack of language support for school students
Parramatta	40	Yes	Language barriers, lack of access to services
St George	30	Undetermined	Not identified
Northern Beaches	35	Yes	Inability to access services, qualifications not being recognised, housing, help with employment, family separation
Randwick	28	Undetermined	Not identified
Lower North Shore	36	Yes	Isolation, work experience
Sutherland	32	Yes	Housing, language, access to health services

Source: Audit Office research.

Seven of the nine meetings resulted in a number of actions for the CRC. We are unaware of the outcome of these actions, or if there has been any further consultation with the communities.

When humanitarian entrants finish their orientation period with the Commonwealth Humanitarian Settlement Service program after six to 12 months, they may be put in touch with their nearest Settlement Grant Program service funded by the Commonwealth. From this point onwards it is up to the humanitarian entrant to make contact with the services they require. For many humanitarian entrants with language, transport and financial issues this is very difficult. There is no single point of contact in New South Wales for humanitarian entrants to find out information on government services that may be of use to them and how they may access these.

The CRC has previously developed a resource to assist new entrants to get essential information. Following a number of highly publicised crimes of opportunity which affected international students in 2009, in early 2010 the CRC published the Z-Card, a compact pocket-sized resource for international students containing important phone numbers and website addresses, tips on personal safety, and contact details for advice on matters ranging from health and money matters to entertainment and educational providers. Subsequently, more than 117,000 Z-Cards were distributed to international students through their schools and colleges and community organisations.

New South Wales has no single point of contact for services useful to humanitarian entrants

New South  
 Wales does not  
 have a  
 coordinated  
 approach to  
 assisting  
 agencies to  
 support  
 humanitarian  
 entrants

#### Exhibit 14: Community Relations Commission initiative to target information to a specific multicultural group

In 2010, the CRC produced a guide that included a wallet-sized card with vital information on living, working and studying in New South Wales.

More than 117,000 of these were distributed to international students.



Source: Community Relations Commission, 2012.

### 3.3 Do agencies have a coordinated approach to assisting humanitarian entrants?

New South Wales does not have a coordinated approach to assisting agencies to support humanitarian entrants. We found that some agencies such as the Department of Education and Communities and NSW Health have developed approaches towards supporting humanitarian entrants in their sector. However, we did not find an overall framework that linked these initiatives to create a coordinated approach to assist humanitarian entrants in New South Wales.

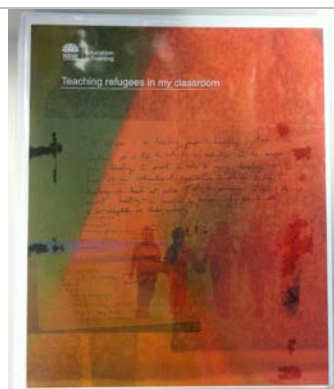
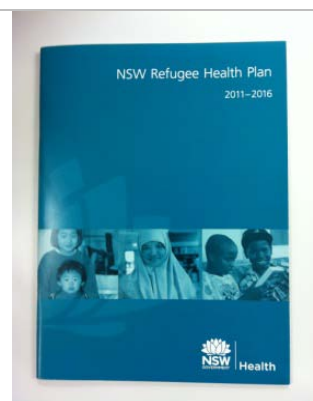
#### Exhibit 15: Agency approaches to respond to the needs of humanitarian entrants

##### NSW Refugee Health Plan 2011–2016

This is a statewide plan for improving the health and wellbeing of refugees and people with refugee-like experiences who have settled in New South Wales.

This plan seeks to ensure the delivery of safe, high quality services to refugees through refugee-specific health services.

The plan identifies a number of priority issues, including the complex medical status of some refugees, immunisation status, emotional and mental health (especially related to experiences of torture and trauma), reproductive health, nutrition and oral health.



##### Department of Education and Communities - Professional development course: Teaching refugees in my classroom

This course aims:

- to develop understandings of the experiences, skills and knowledge that current refugees students bring to school
- to enhance understandings of the language, literacy and learning of recently arrived refugee students
- to develop skills, knowledge and understanding for effective teaching of refugees students in the mainstream classroom.

Source: NSW Refugee Health Plan 2011 - 2016 and Department of Education and Communities – Professional development course: Teaching refugees in my classroom, 2010.



In the absence of an overall framework, there are gaps and duplication in NSW agency services

NSW Government agencies informed us that when they become aware of the needs of humanitarian entrants, they respond in various ways. Some manage the issue of the individual who presents to their service for assistance. Some have developed local projects to respond to urgent issues. Others have developed more permanent approaches to manage recognised ongoing needs.

In the absence of an overall framework, there are gaps and duplication in the services provided by NSW Government agencies.

In 2010, a settlement needs survey of some NSW Government agencies identified service priorities and gaps which align to those raised in our audit consultations:

### Education

- the need for programs to develop language and literacy skills combined with vocational skills and training in the workplace context
- students and families require ongoing support to cope with and understand all aspects of the school system.

### Employment

- the effectiveness of employment support
- inadequate language, literacy and numeracy skills to access training and employment opportunities.

### Health

- gaps in services for survivors of torture and trauma in rural and regional areas
- need for preventative health education, including young people
- availability and use of appropriately trained interpreters by health professionals.

### Language Services

- gap in language services for new and emerging languages.

### Family and social support

- need to expand family relationship services
- support in relation to child protection and domestic violence.

Other States have developed several initiatives to coordinate support for humanitarian entrants:

Victoria: In 2011–12, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship will be establishing a Settlement Coordination Unit that will work with all Victorian Government departments, other levels of government and the community sector to improve service delivery, identify and remedy service gaps, and encourage greater access to support for newly arrived groups in the settlement process.

Source: Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria, 2010–11 Annual Report.

South Australia: Appointment of Director of Settlement Services for Humanitarian Entrants. This position is responsible for coordinating solutions to identified gaps in settlement services for humanitarian entrants.

Source: South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission Annual Report 2009–10.

Western Australia: The Interagency Settlement Group (ISG) was established to improve coordination between the Australian Government and the State Government regarding settlement services for humanitarian entrants and new migrants. The ISG focuses on WA-specific settlement issues and information sharing between Australian and State Government agencies. Its aim is to reduce overlaps and ensure the best services are provided to new migrants and humanitarian entrants.

Source: Government of Western Australia, Office of Multicultural Interests website 2012.

Current reporting does not include results or outcomes specific to humanitarian entrants

### 3.4 Is there monitoring of humanitarian entrant settlement needs and issues in New South Wales?

Multicultural Policies and Services Program reporting does not currently include results or outcomes specific to humanitarian entrants. Given the many concerns of agencies with the needs of humanitarian entrants and the services they require, the CRC would be unable to readily determine the access and equity of this group for services under the current format.

Access and equity are major factors in multicultural policy in New South Wales, because programs and services provided by agencies are the main avenues through which most people are supported by government.

Since 1983, all NSW Government agencies have been required to have a multicultural plan. From 1983 to 2009, these were known as Ethnic Affairs Policies/Priorities Statements. They are now part of the CRC Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP). The MPSP is the mechanism the CRC uses to report on the effectiveness of public authorities in observing the Principles of Multiculturalism.

A multicultural plan shows how the agency will implement the Principles of Multiculturalism, and provide programs and services to meet the needs of New South Wales's culturally and linguistically diverse society.

#### Exhibit 16: New South Wales multicultural plans

A multicultural plan shows the strategies an agency will use to ensure that all people, including those from different cultural, religious and language backgrounds, have equal access to government services.

These strategies can include:

- the provision of interpreters to communicate with clients from non-English speaking backgrounds
- dissemination of key government information in community languages
- promoting or targeting programs and services to ensure access by all population groups
- consultations and client feedback mechanisms which involve a representative range of population groups in the community
- cultural diversity training of staff to support, initially, front line service delivery.

Source: Community Relations Commission, 2012.

All agencies are required to report on the implementation of their multicultural plan in their annual report. They must also submit an extract of the report to the CRC.

In addition, up to 20 key agencies, identified on an annual basis by the CRC, have extra planning and reporting responsibilities. Key agencies are required to work with the CRC to develop a multicultural forward plan, submit the plan to the CRC, report to the CRC on implementation progress during the reporting period and identify multicultural priorities for the next reporting period.

Each year the CRC is to assess all agencies for compliance with the reporting requirements. They then report on compliance in the Community Relations Report which is tabled in parliament.

Agency compliance has varied. In 2011, there were 261 NSW Government agencies. In their review of annual report compliance, the CRC found:

- 104 agencies were compliant with their obligation
- 23 agencies were partially compliant
- 1 agency submitted a report that was non-compliant
- 21 small agencies were not required to report in this annual cycle.

In 2010, the CRC assessed three out of 17 identified key agencies as being noncompliant with the MPSP requirements. The CRC advises that this was for failing to submit the required documentation or failing to achieve the standards required.

The CRC advises that it manages noncompliance by contacting all such agencies and offering practical assistance to remedy this situation for future years.

Government agencies need to be accountable in a meaningful way for meeting their obligations under the MPSP. This is the structure New South Wales has to influence agency planning and to effectively ensure agencies improve their performance and where appropriate work together.

In March 2012, changes to the MPSP were announced. These aim to place stricter accountability on all NSW Government agencies to deliver appropriate services to the entire community.

Directors General, with input from their ministers, will now be required to compile and submit multicultural plans covering all the agencies in their clusters. Plans must then be provided to the CRC. The CRC may then advise Directors General to provide an account of the multicultural performance, and any recommendations for improvement to the relevant cluster minister.

This initiative may improve compliance.

## Recommendations

1. By June 2013, the Community Relations Commission develop, implement and publicise an information portal to become a central access point for information for:
  - local service providers to assist in planning and service delivery
  - humanitarian entrants to assist in accessing NSW Government services
2. By January 2013, the Community Relations Commission develop a 'New South Wales Card' and explore how it may best be offered to new entrants. The card is to provide information for assistance in engaging with NSW Government agencies
3. The Community Relations Commission from June 2014 for five years:
  - require all key agencies nominated by the Community Relations Commission to include a summary of current issues and outcomes for humanitarian entrants identified in the delivery of agency programs and services in their Multicultural Policies and Services Program report
  - the Community Relations Commission to publicly report on humanitarian entrant issues and outcomes in the Community Relations Report
4. By January 2013, the Community Relations Commission review the purpose and focus of:
  - the Multicultural Coordinators Forum
  - the Settlement Service Coalition
  - the Community Relations Commission Community Consultations
 and ensure that humanitarian settlement issues are elevated to the immigration, planning and settlement structure for action as required
5. By January 2013, the Community Relations Commission identify opportunities to work collaboratively with stakeholders to collect better New South Wales data on settlement outcomes, e.g. the Commonwealth's Longitudinal Survey of Refugees and other Migrants. Use this data to monitor and improve outcomes for humanitarian entrants
6. By January 2013, the Community Relations Commission improve public promotion of the responsibility of NSW Government agencies to provide interpreters.

# Appendices

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NSW Auditor-General's Report  
Settling humanitarian entrants  
in NSW

APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Migration and visa categories

### Australian Government Immigration Program

Migration Program	Skilled migration stream	People who have skills or outstanding ability that will contribute to the Australian economy. These groups of people help address specific skill shortages and enhance the skill level of the Australian labour force.
	Family migration stream	Someone living in Australia as a citizen or a permanent resident sponsors their partner, child, parent and other family members to migrate to Australia.
Humanitarian Program	Humanitarian migration stream	Offshore resettlement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refugee – for people who are subject to persecution in their own country, who are typically outside their home country and in need of resettlement.</li> <li>Special Humanitarian Program – for people outside their home country who are subject to substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights and immediate family of persons who have been granted protection in Australia. The application must be supported by an eligible proposer.</li> </ul>
		Onshore protection People who apply for protection (or asylum) after they arrive in Australia.

### Offshore resettlement – Humanitarian and Refugee visa categories

Visa type	Description	Entitlements
Visa 200	Those who have fled persecution in their home country and are living outside their home country.	Humanitarian entrants have the same rights of access and equity to government services as all permanent residents. This means humanitarian entrants are entitled to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>live and work in Australia permanently</li> <li>study in Australian schools and universities</li> <li>access subsidised healthcare through Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)</li> <li>access certain social security payments (subject to waiting periods)</li> <li>be eligible for Australian citizenship (subject to the residence eligibility criteria)</li> <li>propose or sponsor people for permanent residence.</li> </ul>
Visa 201	Those who are living in their home country and are being persecuted.	
Visa 202	Those who have experienced discrimination resulting in gross violation of their human rights in their own country and have links in Australia who are willing to sponsor them.	
Visa 203	Those who are living in or outside their home country and who are in urgent need of protection because there is an immediate threat to their life and security.	
Visa 204	Women and their dependents living outside their home country, who are in danger of victimisation, harassment or serious abuse because of their gender.	

Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012.

## Appendix 2: The NSW Government Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee

The committee's Terms of Reference are:

- to fully address settlement planning issues in New South Wales
- to monitor and assess the impact of humanitarian and non-humanitarian migration in New South Wales
- to coordinate the development of New South Wales policy and positions on settlement issues, and increase the effectiveness of New South Wales representation at the Standing Committee on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (SCIMA) and the Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (MCIMA).

The NSW Government Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee is chaired by the CRC. The NSW Government agencies on the committee are:

- Housing NSW
- NSW Police Force
- Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Ageing, Disability and Home Care
- Department of Finance and Services
- Department of Family and Community Services
- NSW Ministry of Health
- Department of Education and Communities
- Division of Local Government.

A representative from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship also attends the meetings, which provides an opportunity for Commonwealth – State engagement.

The committee meets bimonthly.

Source: Community Relations Commission, 2012.



## Appendix 3: About the audit

### Audit objective

This performance audit assesses how well New South Wales responds to the settlement needs of humanitarian entrants.

### Audit criteria

In answering the audit objective, we used the following audit criteria:

- how well does New South Wales plan for the arrival and initial settlement of humanitarian entrants?
- after orientation, how well does New South Wales meet the ongoing needs of humanitarian entrants?

### Audit scope

This audit focuses on humanitarian entrants who were granted permanent residency to live in Australia while living overseas and so are eligible for State services immediately on arrival.

A part of this group are the Special Humanitarian Program entrants who have links in Australia who are willing to sponsor them. As NSW Government agencies do not distinguish this category when providing services, some of our findings also relate to this group.

We excluded those who apply for humanitarian entrant status while in Australia, for example those on bridging visas or community detention.

Services to humanitarian entrants are provided by Commonwealth Government, non-government organisations and NSW Government agencies. We did not undertake an audit of service delivery agencies, but rather focused on the planning, coordination and monitoring role played by the Community Relations Commission and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. To include an audit of service delivery agencies would significantly widen the scope of the audit and add significantly to costs and time.

### Audit approach

We acquired subject matter expertise by:

- interviews and examination of relevant documents including policies, plans, guidelines, reports, strategies and reviews relating to the settlement of humanitarian entrants in New South Wales and the regional networks established by the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Community Relations Commission to raise issues and coordinate services across New South Wales
- discussions with relevant staff at the Community Relations Commission and the Department of Premier and Cabinet at various regional offices including Blacktown, Newcastle and Coffs Harbour
- discussions with representatives of key stakeholders including NSW Government agencies, local councils, Migrant Resource Centres, and other service providers in the Blacktown, Liverpool, Fairfield, Newcastle and Coffs Harbour areas
- examination of relevant publications by agencies and committees and key non-government organisations
- discussions with representatives from Commonwealth government agencies including the Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- discussions with NSW Government agency representatives on the NSW Government Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee.

We also examined approaches in other jurisdictions including Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia.

## **Audit sample**

We visited NSW Government agencies and key service providers in:

- Blacktown
- Fairfield
- Liverpool
- Newcastle
- Coffs Harbour.

The selection was based upon where most humanitarian entrants settled and advice from the Community Relations Commission.

## **Audit selection**

We use a strategic approach to selecting performance audits which balances our performance audit program to reflect issues of interest to parliament and the community. Details of our approach to selecting topics and our forward program are available on our website.

## **Audit methodology**

Our performance audit methodology is designed to satisfy Australian Audit Standards ASAE 3500 on performance auditing, and to reflect current thinking on performance auditing practices. We produce our audits under a quality management system certified to International Standard ISO 9001. Our processes have also been designed to comply with the auditing requirements specified in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

## **Acknowledgements**

We gratefully acknowledge the cooperation and assistance provided by the Community Relations Commission and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. In particular we wish to thank our liaison officers Richard Acheson, Donna Mosford and John Scott. We also wish to thank staff who participated in our interviews and site visits for providing valuable information.

We also appreciated the assistance given to us by staff from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship, NSW Government agencies and a number of non-government organisations.

## **Audit team**

Our team leader for the performance audit was Penelope Josey, who was assisted by Angelina Pillay. Sean Crumlin provided direction and quality assurance.

## **Audit cost**

Including staff costs, printing costs and overheads, the estimated cost of the audit is \$230,000.

# Performance Auditing

## What are performance audits?

Performance audits determine whether an agency is carrying out its activities effectively, and doing so economically and efficiently and in compliance with all relevant laws.

The activities examined by a performance audit may include a government program, all or part of a government agency or consider particular issues which affect the whole public sector. They cannot question the merits of government policy objectives.

The Auditor-General's mandate to undertake performance audits is set out in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

## Why do we conduct performance audits?

Performance audits provide independent assurance to parliament and the public that government funds are being spent efficiently, economically or effectively and in accordance with the law.

Through their recommendations, performance audits seek to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies so that the community receives value for money from government services.

Performance audits also focus on assisting accountability processes by holding managers to account for agency performance.

Performance audits are selected at the discretion of the Auditor-General who seeks input from parliamentarians, the public, agencies and Audit Office research.

## What happens during the phases of a performance audit?

Performance audits have three key phases: planning, fieldwork and report writing. They can take up to nine months to complete, depending on the audit's scope.

During the planning phase the audit team develops an understanding of agency activities and defines the objective and scope of the audit.

The planning phase also identifies the audit criteria. These are standards of performance against which the agency or program activities are assessed. Criteria may be based on best practice, government targets, benchmarks or published guidelines.

At the completion of fieldwork the audit team meets with agency management to discuss all significant matters arising out of the audit. Following this, a draft performance audit report is prepared.

The audit team then meets with agency management to check that facts presented in the draft report are accurate and that recommendations are practical and appropriate.

A final report is then provided to the CEO for comment. The relevant minister and the Treasurer are also provided with a copy of the final report. The report tabled in Parliament includes a response from the CEO on the report's conclusion and recommendations. In multiple agency performance audits there may be responses from more than one agency or from a nominated coordinating agency.

## Do we check to see if recommendations have been implemented?

Following the tabling of the report in parliament, agencies are requested to advise the Audit Office on action taken, or proposed, against each of the report's recommendations. It is usual for agency audit committees to monitor progress with the implementation of recommendations.

In addition, it is the practice of Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) to conduct reviews or hold inquiries into matters raised in performance audit reports. The reviews and inquiries are usually held 12 months after the report is tabled. These reports are available on the parliamentary website.

## Who audits the auditors?

Our performance audits are subject to internal and external quality reviews against relevant Australian and international standards.

Internal quality control review of each audit ensures compliance with Australian assurance standards. Periodic review by other Audit Offices tests our activities against best practice. We are also subject to independent audits of our quality management system to maintain certification under ISO 9001.

The PAC is also responsible for overseeing the performance of the Audit Office and conducts a review of our operations every three years. The review's report is tabled in parliament and available on its website.

## Who pays for performance audits?

No fee is charged for performance audits. Our performance audit services are funded by the NSW Parliament.

## Further information and copies of reports

For further information, including copies of performance audit reports and a list of audits currently in-progress, please see our website [www.audit.nsw.gov.au](http://www.audit.nsw.gov.au) or contact us on 9275 7100.

## Performance audit reports

No	Agency or Issues Examined	Title of performance Audit Report or Publication	Date Tabled in Parliament or Published
221	Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet	<i>Settling humanitarian entrants in NSW services to permanent residents who come to NSW through the humanitarian migration stream</i>	23 May 2012
220	Department of Finance and Services NSW Ministry of Health NSW Police Force	<i>Managing IT Services Contracts</i>	1 February 2012
219	NSW Health	<i>Visiting Medical Officers and Staff Specialists</i>	14 December 2011
218	Department of Family and Community Services Department of Attorney General and Justice Ministry of Health NSW Police Force	<i>Responding to Domestic and Family Violence</i>	8 November 2011
217	Roads and Traffic Authority	<i>Improving Road Safety: Young Drivers</i>	19 October 2011
216	Department of Premier and Cabinet Department of Finance and Services	<i>Prequalification Scheme: Performance and Management Services</i>	25 September 2011
215	Roads and Traffic Authority	<i>Improving Road Safety: Speed Cameras</i>	27 July 2011
214	Barangaroo Delivery Authority Department of Transport NSW Treasury	<i>Government Expenditure and Transport Planning in relation to implementing Barangaroo</i>	15 June 2011
213	Aboriginal Affairs NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet	<i>Two Ways Together - NSW Aboriginal Affairs Plan</i>	18 May 2011
212	Office of Environment and Heritage WorkCover NSW	<i>Transport of Dangerous Goods</i>	10 May 2011
211	NSW Police Force NSW Health	<i>The Effectiveness of Cautioning for Minor Cannabis Offences</i>	7 April 2011
210	NSW Health	<i>Mental Health Workforce</i>	16 December 2010
209	Department of Premier and Cabinet	<i>Sick leave</i>	8 December 2010
208	Department of Industry and Investment	<i>Coal Mining Royalties</i>	30 November 2010
207	Whole of Government electronic information security	<i>Electronic Information Security</i>	20 October 2010
206	NSW Health NSW Ambulance Service	<i>Helicopter Emergency Medical Service Contract</i>	22 September 2010
205	Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water	<i>Protecting the Environment: Pollution Incidents</i>	15 September 2010
204	Corrective Services NSW	<i>Home Detention</i>	8 September 2010
203	Australian Museum	<i>Knowing the Collections</i>	1 September 2010
202	Industry & Investment NSW Homebush Motor Racing Authority Events NSW	<i>Government Investment in V8 Supercar Races at Sydney Olympic Park</i>	23 June 2010
201	Department of Premier and Cabinet	<i>Severance Payments to Special Temporary Employees</i>	16 June 2010
200	Department of Human Services - Ageing, Disability and Home Care	<i>Access to Overnight Centre-Based Disability Respite</i>	5 May 2010

No	Agency or Issues Examined	Title of performance Audit Report or Publication	Date Tabled in Parliament or Published
199	Department of Premier and Cabinet NSW Treasury WorkCover NSW	<i>Injury Management in the NSW Public Sector</i>	31 March 2010
198	NSW Transport and Infrastructure	<i>Improving the performance of Metropolitan Bus Services</i>	10 March 2010
197	Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW	<i>Improving Road Safety: School Zones</i>	25 February 2010
196	NSW Commission for Children and Young People	<i>Working with Children Check</i>	24 February 2010
195	NSW Police Force NSW Department of Health	<i>Managing Forensic Analysis – Fingerprints and DNA</i>	10 February 2010
194	Department of Premier and Cabinet Department of Services, Technology and Administration NSW Treasury	<i>Government Advertising</i>	10 December 2009
193	Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW	<i>Handback of the M4 Tollway</i>	27 October 2009
192	Department of Services, Technology and Administration	<i>Government Licensing Project</i>	7 October 2009
191	Land and Property Management Authority Maritime Authority of NSW	<i>Administering Domestic Waterfront Tenancies</i>	23 September 2009
190	Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW Environmental Trust	<i>Environmental Grants Administration</i>	26 August 2009
189	NSW Attorney General's Department NSW Department of Health NSW Police Force	<i>Helping Aboriginal Defendants through MERIT</i>	5 August 2009
187	Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW	<i>Improving Road Safety – Heavy Vehicles</i>	13 May 2009
186	Grants	<i>Grants Administration</i>	6 May 2009
185	Forests NSW	<i>Sustaining Native Forest Operations</i>	29 April 2009
184	NSW Police Force	<i>Managing Injured Police</i>	10 December 2008
183	Department of Education and Training	<i>Improving Literacy and Numeracy in NSW Public Schools</i>	22 October 2008
182	Department of Health	<i>Delivering Health Care out of Hospitals</i>	24 September 2008

### Performance audits on our website

A list of performance audits tabled or published since March 1997, as well as those currently in progress, can be found on our website [www.audit.nsw.gov.au](http://www.audit.nsw.gov.au).



## Our vision

To make the people of New South Wales  
proud of the work we do.

## Our mission

To perform high quality independent audits  
of government in New South Wales.

## Our values

**Purpose** – we have an impact, are  
accountable, and work as a team.

**People** – we trust and respect others  
and have a balanced approach to work.

**Professionalism** – we are recognised  
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**Professional people with purpose**

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