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Chair: Sheenagh McShane

Statewide meeting

Disability Action Group – Jacinta Bongiorno

Access to health services for people seeking asylum – Kath
Desmyth & Sarah Christensen

WORKING GROUP UPDATES



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Victorian Refugee Health Network update

- New Team members VRHN
 - Coordinator Meg Quartermaine
quartermaine@foundationhouse.org.au
 - Sector Development and Policy Advisor
Rachael Unwin unwinr@foundationhouse.org.au
 - Manager Community and Sector Development,
Foundation House
Josef Szwarc szwarcj@foundationhouse.org.au



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Meg Quartermaine, Coordinator, Victorian Refugee Health Network

DATA UPDATE



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People who arrived in financial year 2018-19 living in Victoria

- Data requested from the Settlement Database
- In 11 months between 01/07/2018 and 31/05/2019 **3,658** people arrived through HSP settled in Victoria
- Recording and collation of settlement data has moved from Department of Social Services to Department of Home Affairs
- 10 year retrospective data needing to be collated to match VRHN Data Bulletin. August data bulletin will be revised to include this.



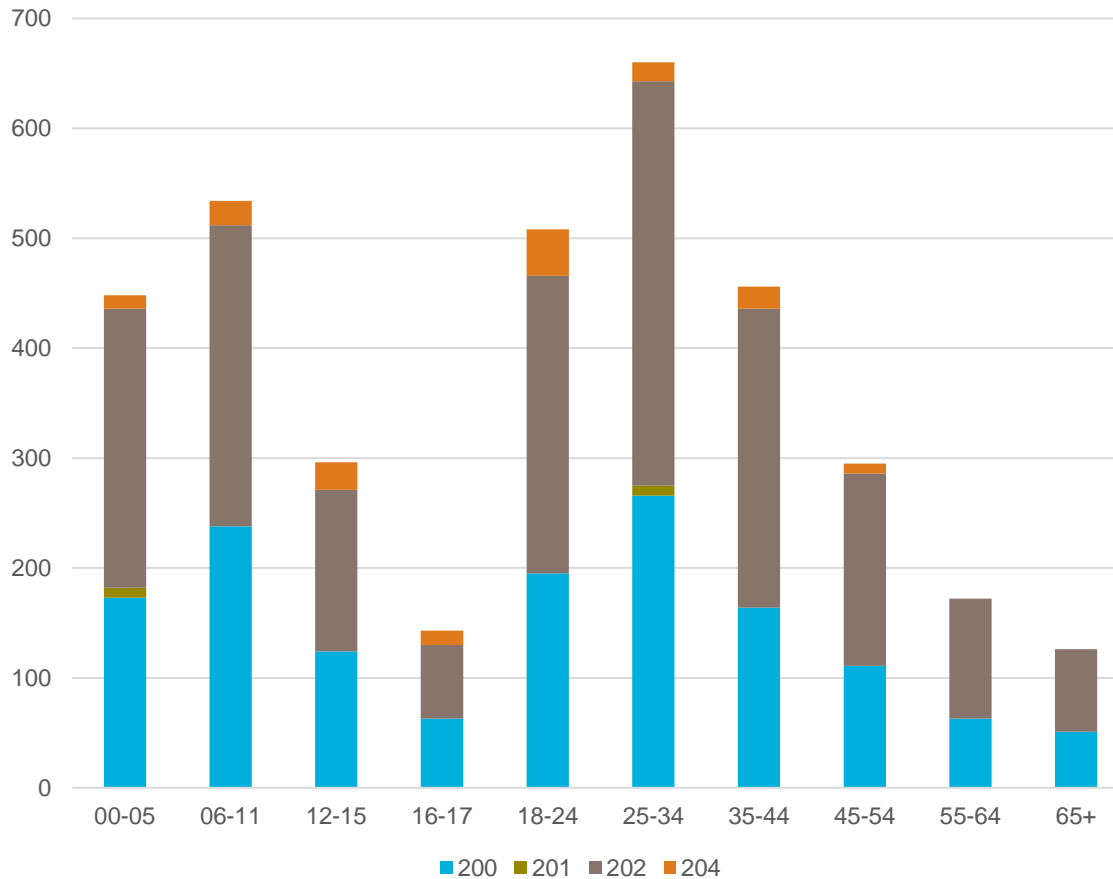
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Country of birth: Top 10

Country of Birth	Visa Numbers				Total
	200	201	202	204	
Iraq	344	0	633	17	994
Myanmar	131	0	573	6	710
Syria	245	0	208	16	469
Afghanistan	131	23	106	7	267
Congo, Democratic Republic of	208	0	14	43	265
Thailand	62	0	153	<5	<220
Iran	58	0	25	11	94
Eritrea	8	0	58	14	80
Ethiopia	44	0	17	19	80
Malaysia	11	0	54	<5	<70

Age on arrival

Figure 1: Age on arrival



LGA where people live: Top 15

Local Government Area	Visa Numbers				Total
	200	201	202	204	
Hume	246	5	397	16	664
Maroondah	21	0	249	0	270
Wyndham	82	0	152	<5	<239
Brimbank	84	0	133	12	229
Greater Geelong	110	0	63	13	186
Greater Dandenong	84	12	63	19	178
Casey	84	9	77	<5	175
Melton	75	0	82	5	162
Greater Shepparton	88	0	5	29	122
Yarra Ranges	22	0	100	0	122
Whittlesea	51	0	48	5	104
Greater Bendigo	10	0	77	0	87
Maribyrnong	16	0	62	<5	<83
Wodonga	51	0	<5	25	81
Mildura	54	0	0	0	54

People seeking asylum

- Increasing numbers of people arriving by plane
 - **16,082** plane arrivals nationally financial year 2018-19 (to 28/02/19)
 - Top nationalities continue to be Malaysia and China
 - ~**28,000** PPV applications nationally in financial year 2017-18; **18,290** in financial year 2016-17
- People who arrived by boat

On 30/06/2019, **6,634**¹ people seeking asylum who arrived by boat prior to 2014 lived in Victoria on Bridging Visa E (BVE)



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¹ Source: *Illegal Maritime Arrivals on Bridging E Visa*, Department of Home Affairs:
<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-stats/files/illegal-maritime-arrivals-bve-june-2019.pdf>

TPV and SHEV holders

- **5,257** temporary protection visas (SHEV and TPV) granted to people living in Victoria
- **4,373** people awaiting an outcome of their application²
- Data about LGA of residence is not readily available

² Source: *IMA Legacy Caseload Report on Processing Status and Outcomes*, Department of Home Affairs: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-stats/files/ima-legacy-caseload-july-2019.pdf>



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Josef Szwarc, Manager, Community and Sector Development,
Foundation House

POLICY UPDATE



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Policy update

- Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System update
 - Formal submissions closed
 - The Network's submission is on our website
 - Public hearings complete – witness statements can be read on the Commission's website:
<https://rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/Hearings>
 - Interim Report due November 2019



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Policy update

- Department of Health and Human Services' new strategic plan
 - People seeking asylum identified as a priority
 - “Improve the integration, inclusivity and responsiveness of services provided to people seeking asylum in Victoria to support better outcomes and reduce the destitution and vulnerability they currently experience”
 - 2019/20 budget allocation \$3 million for specialist Asylum Seeker programming focussed in South East and West
 - <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/department-health-and-human-services-strategic-plan>



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Policy update

- Increasing numbers of plane arrivals
 - Malaysian government is reportedly working with Australia to address large numbers of Malaysian arrivals
- Nauru and Manus Island
 - First quarterly report of the Independent Health Advisory Panel
 - Transfers under Medevac legislation
 - People resettled under the Turnbull-Obama deal



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Policy update

- ‘Medevac’
 - Dutton has introduced bill to repeal Medevac
 - Subject of Senate inquiry
https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/RepairMedicaltransfers)



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Kath Desmyth, Statewide Facilitator, Refugee Health Program

CLINICAL SERVICES UPDATE



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Merilyn Spratling, Coordinator, Eastern Region Refugee Health Network

Therese Watson, Coordinator, South East

REGIONAL NETWORK UPDATES



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The Eastern Region Refugee Health Network (ERRHN)

Meetings:

- Every 3 months at EACH (East Ringwood side)
- Rotating chair and minute taker from participating organisations

Membership:

- Any organisation providing health, settlement or community services and/or support to refugees or asylum seekers in the eastern region of Melbourne
- Any person of refugee or asylum seeker background who represents his/her community

Aims

- To share information and service improvement activities
- To identify and advocate to address unmet needs and/or improve the health and wellbeing of refugees or asylum seekers in the eastern region
- To inform the Victorian Refugee Health Network about issues in the eastern region of Melbourne
- To provide education for members.



Current Membership of the ERRHN

- Community representatives (Karen and Chin communities)
- EACH social and community health (RH program, GPs, health promotion, etc)
- AMES settlement service
- Migrant Information Centre
- Blackburn English Language School
- Foundation House
- Swinburne TAFE (Health service)
- INSPIRO community health service
- Elishacare
- Dept. of Health & Human Services (Eastern Region)
- Dept. of Home Affairs
- Victoria Police
- Staff from local GP clinics who provide services for refugees
- Croydon Baptist (Karen) Church
- Primary and secondary school nurses (though the nurses located at Blackburn English Language School)
- Department of Human Services (Centrelink Multicultural officer)
- Victorian Refugee Health Network





Some of the activities of the ERRHN...

The Network has been operating since 2009 and some of the actions have included:

- Advocacy for funded immunisation (2010-2014)
- **Actions to improve referral pathways (ongoing)**
- Advocacy to DIAC regarding mental health status of people released from detention (2012)
- **Identification of GPs willing to offer pro bono clinical care for Asylum Seekers without Medicare (2014)**
- Development & distribution of 'postcards' expressing concern about asylum seeker policies sent to Minister of Immigration (2014)
- **Ongoing program of speakers at meetings (eg MABELS, MIC playgroups, NDIS, etc)**
- Advocacy to improve support and referral pathways for people experiencing drug and alcohol issues (2017-ongoing).



South Eastern Refugee and People Seeking Asylum Health Alliance

Health, Settlement, SRSS and Humanitarian Service providers

Focus for 2019 Mental Health

Submission into the Royal Commission into Mental Health

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Working Groups

- Refugee and Asylum Seeker Suicide prevention
 - South Sudanese second generation , refugees and people seeking asylum at risk
 - Post prevention pilot protocol in development to coordinate approaches to assist people bereaved by suicide
 - Help Card
 - Gate Keeper Training Scoping current training in the community
- People Seeking Asylum without income
 - People Seeking Asylum at risk of Destitution Task Force (PSAARD)
 - Consortium
 - Pharmaceutical costs
- Emergency Management
 - Work to be developed

Guest Speakers

Simon Gray, Employer Engagement Coordinator
Brotherhood of St Laurence

Rob Koch, Coordinator of Community Development and Volunteer
Services Monash Health Refugee Health and Wellbeing

Group Exercise

EMPLOYMENT



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EVALUATION



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What was the most useful part
of today's meeting?



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What can be better?



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Should we increase duration
of this meeting by one hour-30
minutes?



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