



victorian refugee  
health network

# State-wide Meeting

November 2022

# Agenda

2:10  
PM

## Order of Agenda

- **National Policy Update:** Refugee Council Of Australia (Asher Hirsch)
- **Settlement Service Update:** AMES (Gerard Murren)
- **Victoria Settlement Data:** VRHN Sector Development and Policy Advisor (Kristina Rienmueller & Gavin Halge)
- **Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Project:** Foundation House/VRHN (Mursha Dalay-on Gapasin & Ambreen Mirza)
- **Social Inclusion Action Groups and Social Prescribing:** Mental Health and Wellbeing Division Department of Health (Lexi Marsh)
- **Disability Royal Commission:** National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) (Dominic Golding)

5  
mins

- **Questions and Discussion.**

3:55  
PM

- **Evaluation via SurveyMonkey**

4:00  
PM

- **Meeting Close**

# Headline Updates

2:10  
PM

## National Policy Updates

Refugee Council Of Australia



# Global displacement as at July 2022

- 30.2 million refugees – 21.3 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate as at 31 Dec 2021,  
5.8 million Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate, 3.1 million Ukrainian refugees in Europe as at 12 July 2022
- 4.4 million Venezuelans displaced abroad
- 4.6 million asylum seekers
- 60.2 million people internally displaced – 53.2 million as at 31 Dec 2021, 7 million Ukrainians as at 12 July 2022

**Total number of people displaced: 99.4 million** – 39.2 million outside country of origin

# Solutions for refugees

Three durable solutions for refugees:

- Safe return to country of origin
- Local integration in host country
- Resettlement to another country

In 2021:

- 429,300 refugees were able to return home
- 57,500 refugees were resettled to other countries (down from 107,800 in 2019)

**More than 30 million refugees have no solution in sight**

# Our vision for change

Since 2017, we have been working with member organisations to promote a [Platform for Change](#):

1. Solutions for people held in the limbo of offshore processing.
2. A single national asylum process which offers fairness, rights to appeal, a basic safety net and permanent protection to refugees.
3. Immigration detention used only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible.
4. An expanding refugee resettlement program which includes an additional community sponsorship program.
5. Australia to begin caring about the treatment of refugees in Asia, promoting policies which increase the chance of refugees getting properly protected where they first seek help.

# Offshore processing

- 3,127 people were sent to Nauru and PNG from July 2013 to early 2014. All boats of asylum seekers since then sent back to Indonesia, Sri Lanka or Vietnam
- 1,056 refugees have been resettled – 1,006 to USA and the rest to Canada and Europe. More than 750 have returned to country of origin, 15 have died and 251 children born since 2013
- 1,384 people remain – 112 in Nauru, 104 in PNG, 1,168 transferred to Australia for medical reasons (6 still in detention)

**Resettlement options currently available:** up to 250 in USA, 450 in New Zealand (150 per year to June 2025) and 159 sponsorship applications to Canada through [Operation Not Forgotten](#)

**ALP plans to continue with this policy** but must find solutions for 500-600 people

# Temporary protection

- 31,253 people assessed under 'fast track' process with no right to independent review
- **19,345 refugees** now on 3-year Temporary Protection Visa (TPVs) or 5-year Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV). 1,190 are still waiting for an initial decision. 987 seeking review of negative decision. Question of fairness for 9,731 people refused visas under an unfair process opposed by the ALP

Policy leaves refugees **unable to reunite with separated family members** and always uncertain about their future in Australia and travel permissions worsening

**ALP is committed to abolishing temporary protection.** No indication yet of when and whether refused applications will be reviewed or of any special measures to help separated families reunite quickly



# Australia's asylum process

Two-year backlog in deciding Onshore Protection visa claims (26,227 applications) and six-year backlog in reviewing negative decisions through Administrative Appeals Tribunal (36,708 cases)

85% cut to assistance for asylum seekers through Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program – from \$246 million in 2016-17 to \$36.9 million now. Substantial increase in destitution and homelessness among asylum seekers

Previous government cut funding of free legal advice (IAAAS) to people seeking asylum

ALP National Platform includes commitments to:

- Means-tested access to legal advice and appropriate social services (including income and crisis housing) during the assessment of protection claims
- Streamlining processing of asylum claims to give people prompt and fair assessment of their asylum claims

# Immigration detention

1,395 people in immigration detention as at 31 May 2022 – for an average of 843 days. Average length of detention was less than 100 days when ALP was last in office and is currently 30 days in Canada and 48 days in USA.

570 detainees that have been detained for two years or more

All decisions about detention rest with Department of Home Affairs and Minister. Courts have no jurisdiction. Legislation now requires a visa cancellation for any non-citizen convicted of an offence which can attract a sentence of 12 months or more – and non-citizens without valid visas must be deported or detained. Hundreds of refugees and asylum seekers in indefinite detention as a result

ALP National Platform includes commitments to humane and risk-based detention policies, using options other than indefinite detention, striving to limit mandatory detention to no longer than 90 days, and independent oversight of detention facilities

# Refugee and humanitarian program

In 2012, Labor Government increased the Refugee and Humanitarian Program to 20,000 places per year in but it is now 13,750 places with 4,125 additional places for refugees from Afghanistan

More than **14,000 refugee places have been lost** since 2020 after the program's annual planning level became a "ceiling"

A small community sponsorship pilot is beginning this month but this is within the humanitarian program

The ALP National Platform includes commitments to:

- Progressively increase the humanitarian intake to 27,000 places per year
- Progressively increase the community sponsored refugee program to 5,000 places per year

# Australia's engagement in Asia

No constructive engagement by Australia on refugee protection questions in Asia since 2013. Bali Process has existed for 20 years but brought no tangible outcomes for refugees

If Australian Government wants no irregular movement of refugees by boat, it must take an active interest in how refugees can be better protected in places where they first seek assistance

ALP National Platform includes commitments to:

- Australia showing humanitarian and protection leadership in South East Asia
- Combatting people smuggling by seeking innovative, effective and lawful solutions to irregular movement of people through the region – focusing also on improving access to accommodation, work rights, health and education, and expediting claims for refugee status and durable solutions
- Increasing funding for UNHCR globally and work with UNHCR to build its capacity in South East Asia to assist the region's asylum seekers
- Appointing a Special Envoy for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Issues

# Headline Updates

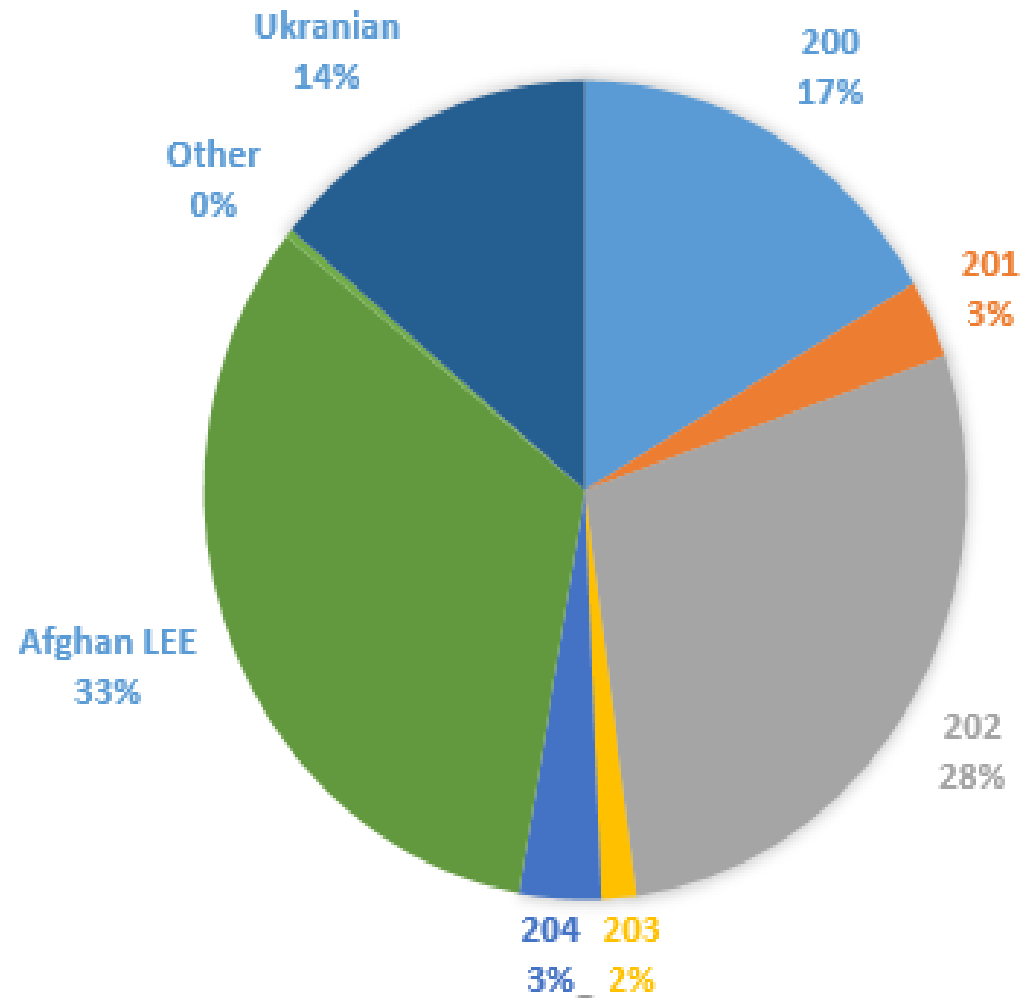


## Settlement Updates

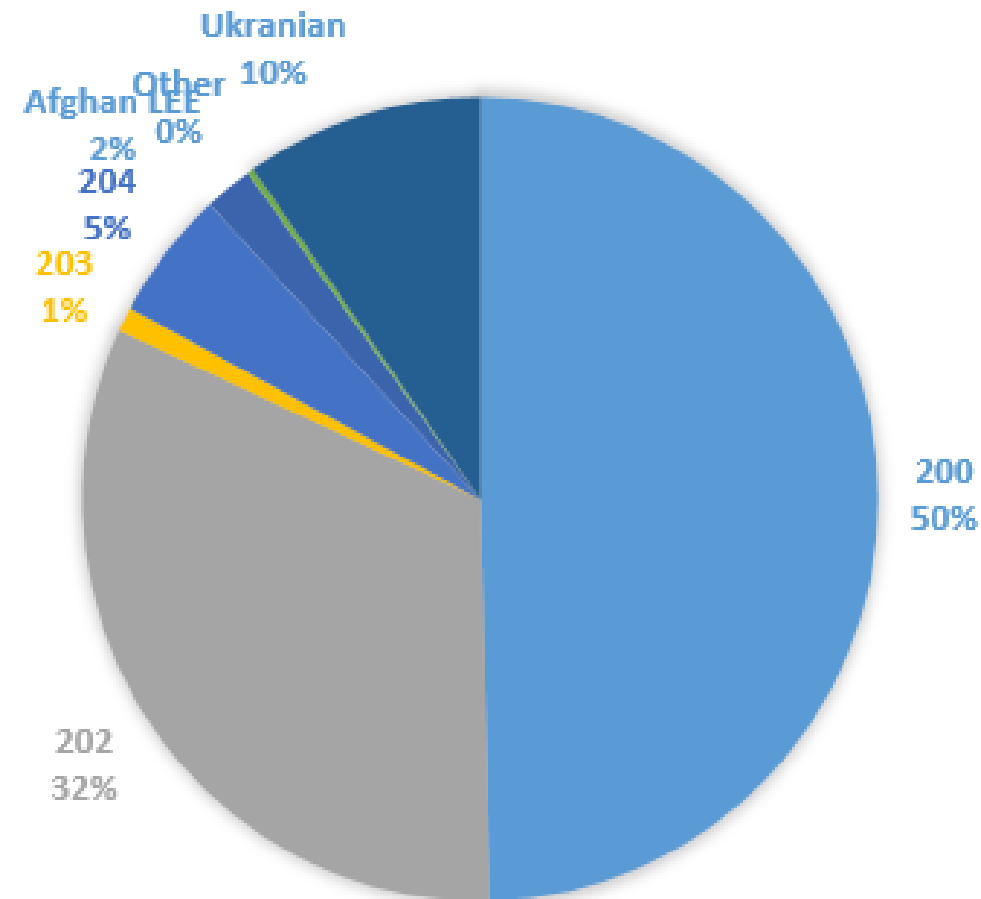
AMES Australia



# Current Client Cohort



# Regional Victoria



# Updates

- Referrals to HSP
- Subclass 449 Humanitarian Stay visa
- Afghan evacuees 12 months +
- Regional Victoria – Housing, access to GP services
- Ukrainian update





# Victorian Settlement Data

Victorian Refugee Health Network



# Settlement Data in Victoria

Visa Subclass	Details:
• <b>Refugee Visa (200)</b>	✓ Permanent Stay ✓ With these visas you can move to Australia if you are subject to persecution in your home county. These visas allow you and your family to live, work and study indefinitely in Australia
• <b>In Country Special Humanitarian (201)</b>	
• <b>Emergency Rescue (203)</b>	
• <b>Women at Risk (204)</b>	
• <b>Global Special Humanitarian visa (202)</b>	✓ Permanent Stay ✓ With this visa you can move to Australia if you face substantial discrimination or human rights abuses and have a proposer and stay in Australia with your immediate family.

## Humanitarian settlers in Victoria over the last year according to age

Visa subclasses (200 series) with a Date of Arrival between 01/10/2021 and 30/09/2022 are currently recorded as residing in Victoria as at 04/10/2022.

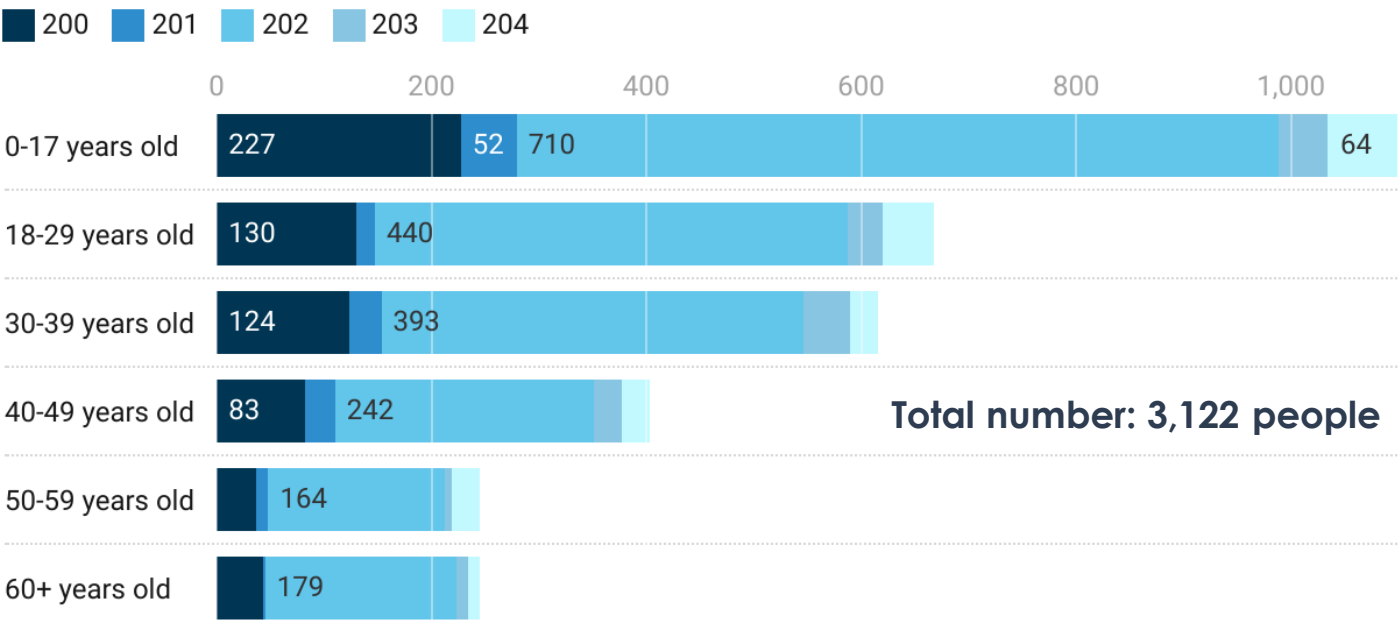


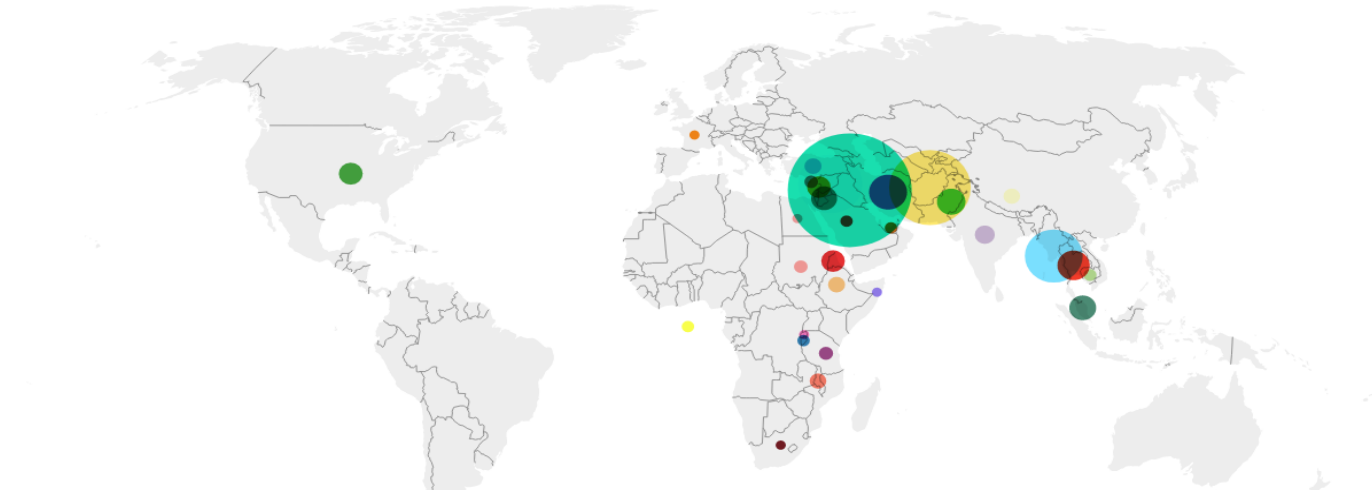
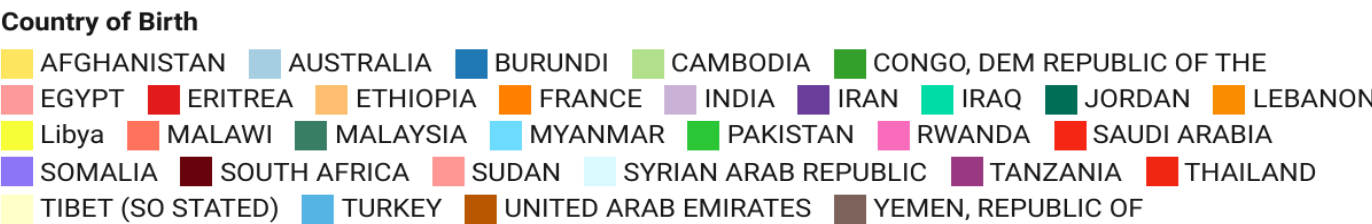
Chart: Victorian Refugee Health Network • Source: Australian Government- Settlement Data • Created with Datawrapper

\* This data does not include those on Bridging visas or temporary protection visas (TPV, SHEV, 449, 786).

# Settlement Data in Victoria

## Country of Birth - Humanitarian Settlers who reside in Victoria and arrived in the past year

People on Refugee Category Visas (200 series) with a Date of Arrival between 01/10/2021 and 30/09/2022 are currently recorded as residing in Victoria as at 04/10/2022



Total number of people = 3,122

\* This data does not include those on Bridging visas or temporary protection visas (TPV, SHEV, 449, 786).

Map: Victorian Refugee Health Network • Source: Department of Home Affairs- Settlement Data • Created with Datawrapper

## Top 15 Country of Birth in the past year

Country of Birth	Visa Subclass (200, 201, 202, 203 & 204)	202 Visa Subclass
IRAQ	1371	1,209
AFGHANISTAN	573	188
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	341	230
MYANMAR	273	123
IRAN	108	79
THAILAND	74	57
PAKISTAN	55	19
MALAYSIA	48	38
JORDAN	44	36
CONGO, DEM REPUBLIC OF THE	36	7
ERITREA	35	35
LEBANON	35	25
INDIA	23	23
TIBET (SO STATED)	14	14
ETHIOPIA	15	12
Total Number of people	3,122 people	

# Settlement Data in Victoria

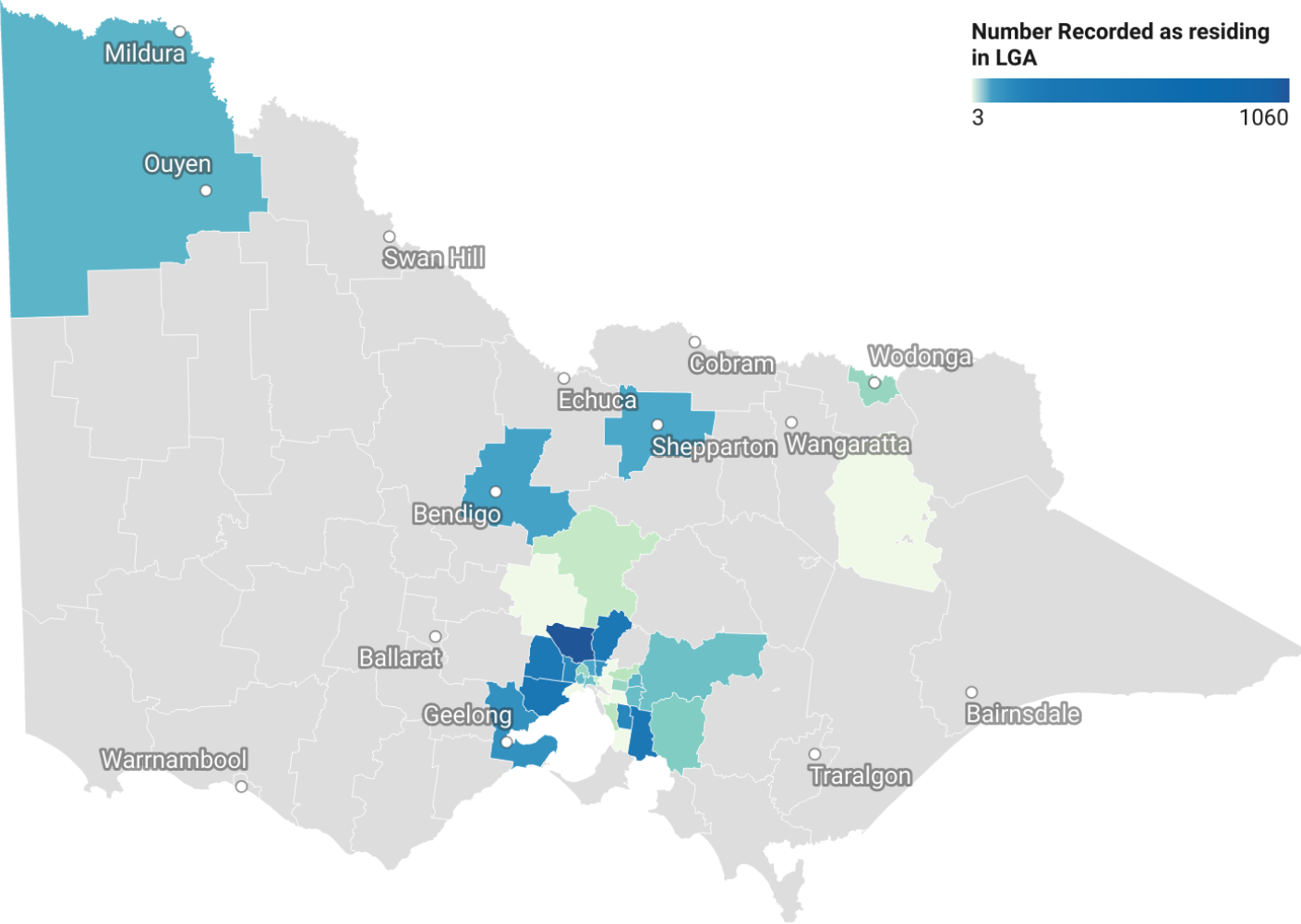
Top 10 Settlement Areas  
who arrived in the past year

Local Government Area	Number of arrivals (Visa Subclass 200s series)
Hume	1,060
Wyndham	299
Casey	261
Whittlesea	255
Melton	219
Greater Dandenong	157
Brimbank	155
Darebin	102
Greater Geelong	100
Greater Bendigo	62

\* This data does not include those on Bridging visas or temporary protection visas (TPV, SHEV, 449, 786).

## Humanitarian settlers who reside in Victorian Local Government Areas and arrived in the past year

Visa Subclass (200, 201, 202, 203, 204) with a Date of Arrival between 01/10/2021 and 30/09/2022 are currently recorded as residing in Victoria as at 04/10/2022



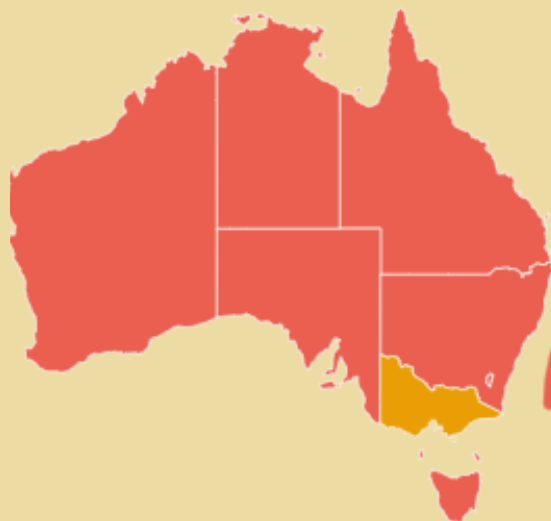
Map: Victorian Refugee Health Network • Source: Department of Home Affairs - Settlement Data • Map data: ABS • Created with Datawrapper

Link to interactive map: <https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/NFB59/2/>

# Humanitarian Settlers in Victoria who have arrived over the last 5 years

HUMANITARIAN SETTLERS (TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT) WITH A DATE OF ARRIVAL BETWEEN 2017 AND 2022 CURRENTLY RECORDED AS RESIDING IN VICTORIA AS AT 04/07/2022

\* As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 4,874 people were living in Victoria on Bridging visa E.

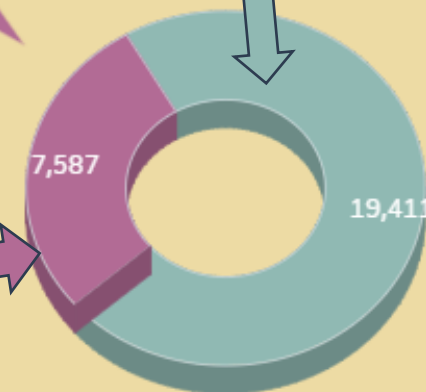


VICTORIA

- REFUGEE VISA (200)
- IN COUNTRY SPECIAL HUMANITARIAN (201)
- EMERGENCY RESCUE (203)
- WOMEN AT RISK (204)
- GLOBAL SPECIAL HUMANITARIAN VISA (202)
- PROTECTION VISA (866)

Number of people currently residing in Victoria on Temporary Protection Visa Holders (785, 449, 786 & 790)

Number of people currently residing in Victoria on permanent Humanitarian Visas (200 series & 866)



**APPROXIMATELY 32,000 PEOPLE**

- TEMPORARY PROTECTION (785)
- TEMPORARY HUMANITARIAN STAY (449)
- TEMPORARY HUMANITARIAN CONCERN (786)
- SAFE HAVEN ENTERPRISE (790)

Temporary Protection Visa Holders 7,587

Humanitarian Settlers 19,411

Every quarter, Victorian Refugee Health Network (VRHN) publish a Data Bulletin that outlines Settlement data for Victoria and is available on our website here:

<https://refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/engage/statewide-meetings/>



# **Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Project**

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Foundation House & Victorian Refugee Health  
Network



# Background

- 2019 Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system
- 65 recommendations
- ✓ Recommendation 34: Working in partnership with and improving accessibility for diverse communities

*"...ensure the active engagement of Victoria's diverse communities throughout the process of planning, implementing and managing the reformed mental health and wellbeing system."*





# The Project

**Enhancing capacity of refugee and asylum seeker communities and service sector to promote and engage in Victoria's mental health reforms and initiatives**

*[Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Project]*

**Funding agency:** Victorian Department of Health  
(Mental Health & Wellbeing Promotion Office)

**Project Components:**

- Victorian Refugee Health Network
- Foundation House – Community Capacity Building

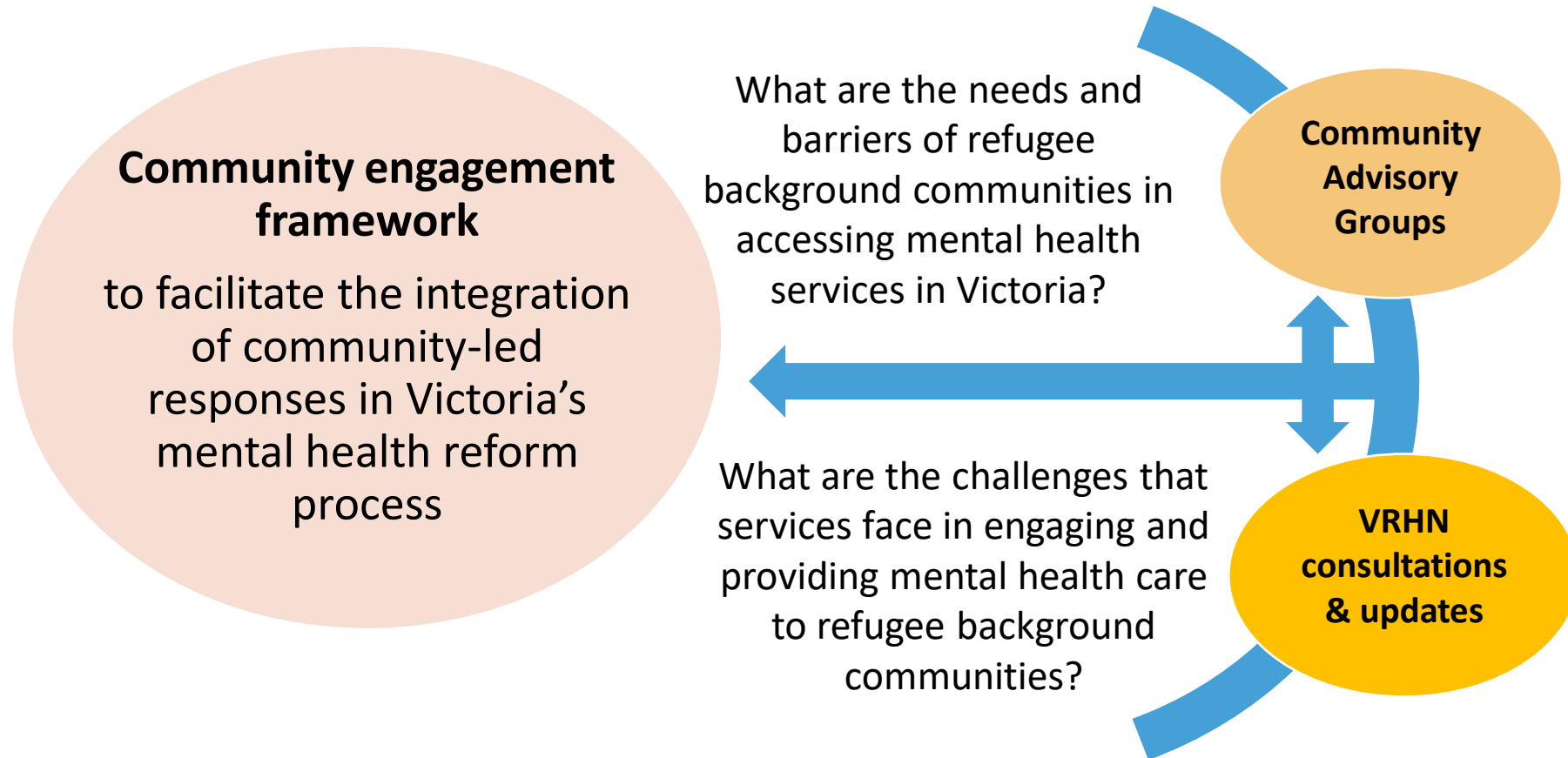
**Duration:** 1 year



# Project aim and objectives



# Project aim and objectives



# Next steps - Community Advisory Groups

The advisory groups will work alongside the Foundation House project team to:

1. identify challenges and concerns faced by members of their communities around mental health and wellbeing
2. develop activities that will enhance community members' understanding of mental health and wellbeing
3. provide advice on ways to promote mental health and wellbeing and improve services for people from refugee background communities



# Next steps...

## VRHN Consultations and Updates

- Survey
  - Challenges in engaging with and providing mental health care to clients from R/AS backgrounds
  - VRHN members and subscribers
  - Mental health services/ Other services
  - Key issues and needs
  - Closes late-November

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XPRDM3V>
- Focus groups
- Updates on the mental health reforms through the e-bulletin & website

# Project contacts

Mursha Dalay-on Gapasin (Project Lead)

[mursha@foundationhouse.org.au](mailto:mursha@foundationhouse.org.au)

Ambreen Mirza (Project Officer)

[mirzaa@foundationhouse.org.au](mailto:mirzaa@foundationhouse.org.au)

Tilly Carrodus (Admin Officer)

[carrodust@foundationhouse.org.au](mailto:carrodust@foundationhouse.org.au)

# Strengthening MHW in communities (Recommendation 15 RCVMHS)

Victorian Refugee Health Network

8 November 2022



Department  
of Health

# Introducing the Mental Health and Wellbeing Promotion Office

Mental Health and Wellbeing Promotion Adviser – Monica Kelly

## Policy Team

- Maja Havrilova, Manager
- Charmaine Chew, Senior Policy Officer
- Vacant, Policy Officer

## Programs Team

- Lexi Marsh, Manager
- Emma Birrell, Senior Project Officer
- Shauna Carlon, Project Officer

## Diversity and Inclusion Team

- Renee Imbesi
- Vacant, Senior Policy Officer
- Adriana Ridzwan, Policy Officer

MHWPO Principal Adviser – Cassie Nicholls



# The Mental Health and Wellbeing Promotion Office has a broad range of functions and some immediate priorities

## FUNCTIONS

- Lead **strategic oversight and statewide planning**
- Provide visible **leadership coordination** across sectors through whole-of-government arrangements
- Lead **monitoring and accountability** of prevention and promotion within the outcomes framework
- Lead **research and partnerships, public communications and workforce development** to embed prevention and promotion in Victoria

## PRIORITIES IN 2022

- Develop **Wellbeing in Victoria: A Plan to Promote Good Mental Health**
- Establish **social prescribing trials** in Local Services
- Commence establishment of **social inclusion action groups** in partnership with local councils
- Develop **Diverse Communities' MHW Framework** and blueprint for action

The RCVMHS recognised that *“communities are best placed to understand and drive local social connection and inclusion efforts that support mental health and wellbeing”*

The MHWPO is leading implementation of Recommendation 15, supporting good mental health and wellbeing in local communities. This includes establishing **social prescribing trials**.



Social prescribing will **develop pathways** to non-clinical community-based activities, with the aim to reduce social isolation and loneliness. This trial will be implemented in the first six Local Adult and Older Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Services (Local Services).



The **social prescribing model has been co-designed**, with Local Services expected to build on this model with additional co-design to tailor social prescribing to the needs of their community. **A project control group (PCG) is overseeing implementation** of the co-designed model.



The co-design process defined the qualities of the **link worker/s** who will be employed by each Local Service to support people to engage in local activities and to support local community organisations who are critical to the success of social prescribing.



The three-year trials are being established and will be **robustly evaluated** to determine social prescribing’s value in the reformed mental health and wellbeing system. Older Victorians are a priority cohort for the trials.

## Recommendation 15 also asked the VicGov to establish and recurrently fund Social Inclusion Action Groups (formerly Community Collectives)



Social Inclusion Action Groups will support local communities to **promote social connection and inclusion** and connect people to community initiatives that will support their wellbeing.



Local Governments will be funded to bring together **community members and leaders** to guide and lead local social connection and inclusion efforts. This will include funding for local initiatives.



The Royal Commission recommended that each LGA be funded to establish a Social Inclusion Action Group. The first five will be established in 2022-23 and the next five in 2024-25.

**SIAGS 1 – 5: Benalla, Frankston, Latrobe, Mansfield, Wangaratta**



Social inclusion action groups will be **evaluated**. The evaluation will inform best practice for further rollout.

# Disability Royal Commission

National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)

Dominic Golding- Policy Officer

# Disability Royal Commission

Dominic Golding- Policy Officer at National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)

## **Notes from Presentation:**

- Dominic presented on the Disability Royal Commission public hearings which he attended and was asked about what intersectionality is and ideas on what the cultural and language barriers that exist for CALD communities with a disability e.g. varying cultural understanding of disability, some languages not having a word for disability, the difficulty of accessing NDIS.
- Dominic presented some research to the Commission noting that people in Box Hill (high number of community members from Chinese speaking background) have a high-level of around 100% engagement with NDIS whereas some regions in rural Victoria saw everyone was having difficulties accessing NDIS (despite cultural background) at 50-70%.
- The first two days of the public hearings included stories and experiences and themes about deaf and harder hearing people and those who are deaf and blind. There were speakers from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker background who spoke about their experience and how the system had failed them.
- Dominic presented with FECA on structural issues and referenced the Convention of the Rights of people with a disability.
- There was discussion on how culture can have a devastating impact in the understanding of disability as well as intersection between experiences e.g., for LGBTIQ+ communities.
- NDIS and NDIA were struggling to explain the definition of CALD and how this differs from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) understanding. They also struggled with the concept of CALD and how that plays into obtaining data and why there is such a low uptake from CALD backgrounds into NDIS.
- Dominic flagged that the closing of submissions for people from the community about the experiences from CALD background will be the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.
- Anyone can make a submission to the Disability Royal Commission about their experience, recommended improvements, success stories and whether that is across health, education, settlement service sectors.
- You don't have to write this submission it can be via various mediums (video, voice recording etc). More information can be found in the links below.
- **Links to resources:**

<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/share-your-story/make-your-submission>

<https://www.neda.org.au/disability-royal-commission-information>



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e-Bulletin	Network Member
<a href="#">✉ Subscribe</a> 1,410	<a href="#">✉ Become a Member</a>
collection notice	As a network member, we will provide you with practical resources, advocacy and networking opportunities to keep all members informed and connected

### State wide meeting dates for 2023:

1. 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023 2-4pm
2. 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023 2-4pm
3. 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023 2-4pm

### Rural/Regional Consultation

Three consultation sessions are anticipated to occur in 2023 a month prior to each Statewide meeting and be a standing agenda item to present on.

[Become a member by subscribing here!](#)

# Evaluation survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7NHYLVH>



victorian refugee  
health network

Thank you for  
attending the VRHN  
State-wide Meeting!

November 2022