



victorian refugee  
health network

# State-wide Meeting

March 2023

# Agenda

2:10  
PM

## Order of Agenda

- **National Policy Update:** Refugee Council Of Australia
- **Settlement Service Update:** AMES
- **Victoria Settlement Data:** VRHN Sector Development and Policy Advisor
- **Water Well Project:** Evaluations Officer
- **Partners in Wellbeing Service:** CALD engagement worker
- **Rural/Regional Consultation Group:** Chair

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



# National Policy Update

30 March 2023

Rebecca Eckard  
Refugee Council of Australia

# Key issues and updates

**1. Resolution of Status visas**

**2. Status unchanged**

**3. Offshore processing**

**4. Immigration detention**

**5. Humanitarian Program**

# Resolution of Status (RoS) visa

- Government is offering permanent RoS visa to 19,712 people with TPVs or SHEVs
- ❖ Approx 9,000 others must wait for decision on primary application, administrative review or judicial review or seek ministerial intervention
- Funded free legal advice available to people applying for RoS through refugee community legal centres. No application charge. Conversion expected to take 12 months.
- Department meeting weekly with legal providers and Services Australia
- Civil society working with Department on family reunion options and pathways for people rejected through fast track

# People whose status is unchanged

## **Permanent Onshore Protection visa applicants**

- Applicants arrived on another form of valid temporary visa (tourist, student, work)
- If assessed as meeting refugee definition, granted permanent Onshore Protection visa. In 2021-22, 1,762 visas granted. Linked with overall Humanitarian Program cap.

## **People subject to offshore processing policy**

- People who arrived by boat on or after 19 July 2013 and sent to detention on PNG or Nauru
- Denied access to permanent residency in Australia. Must find resettlement in another country (USA, Canada or NZ) or return home

# Solutions for refugees in offshore processing

- 3,127 people sent to Nauru and PNG from July 2013 to early 2014. 1,100 refugees resettled. More than 750 returned to country of origin, 15 have died and 251 children born since 2013
- 1,275 people remain – 60 in Nauru, 90 in PNG, 1,125 transferred to Australia for medical reasons
- 860 resettlement options currently available: up to 250 in USA, 450 in New Zealand and 159 sponsorship applications to Canada through [Operation Not Forgotten](#)

**Update:** Movement from residence determination (community detention) to “Final Departure” Bridging Visas for families in this group, so there are implications for access to health services (IHMS when in CD).

Greens’ Evacuation to Safety Bill defeated in Parliament.



# Reform of immigration detention

- 1,061 people in immigration detention as at 31 Jan 2023 – for average of 806 days (30 days in Canada and 48 days in USA). No independent body able to prevent detention or compel release.
- Legislation requires visa cancellation for any non-citizen convicted of an offence which can attract a sentence of 12 months or more. Non-citizens without valid visas must be deported or detained.
- Nationalities with longest detention averages: Afghanistan (1275 days), Iran (1075), Sudan (1064), Sri Lanka (1029), Stateless (959), Iraq (943). Shortest: NZ (275), UK (347), China (365).

**Update:** Urgently review detention of those with no country of safe return. Some recent releases and then legislation to re-detain (Aggregate Sentences).

# Expanding Australia's refugee program

- Annual refugee program cut from 18,750 places to 13,750 in 2020.
- Program “ceiling” resulted in 13,825 visas not granted between March 2020 and June 2022.  
The 2020-21 refugee program was smallest in 45 years – just 5,947 visas granted.
- Additional annual intake of 4,125 Afghan refugees 2022 to 2026 = 17,875 places annually now
- New Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) of 1,500 places to June 2025. Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement program of 200 places initially from 2021.

**Update: Continued advocacy to progressively increase Refugee Program** to 27,000 places a year and community sponsorship to 5,000 additional places. Further work with Government on Complementary Pathways (family, skilled, education). Delink.

# Questions?

# Headline Updates



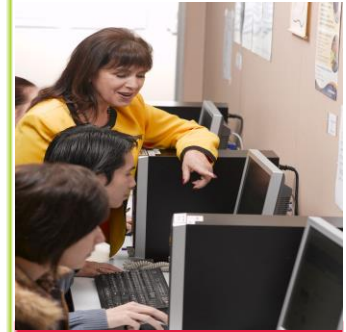
## Settlement Updates

AMES Australia

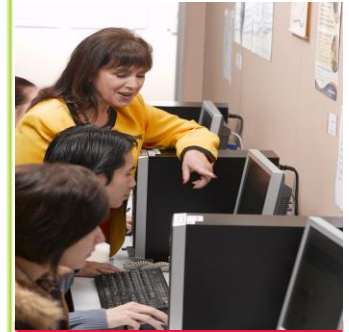
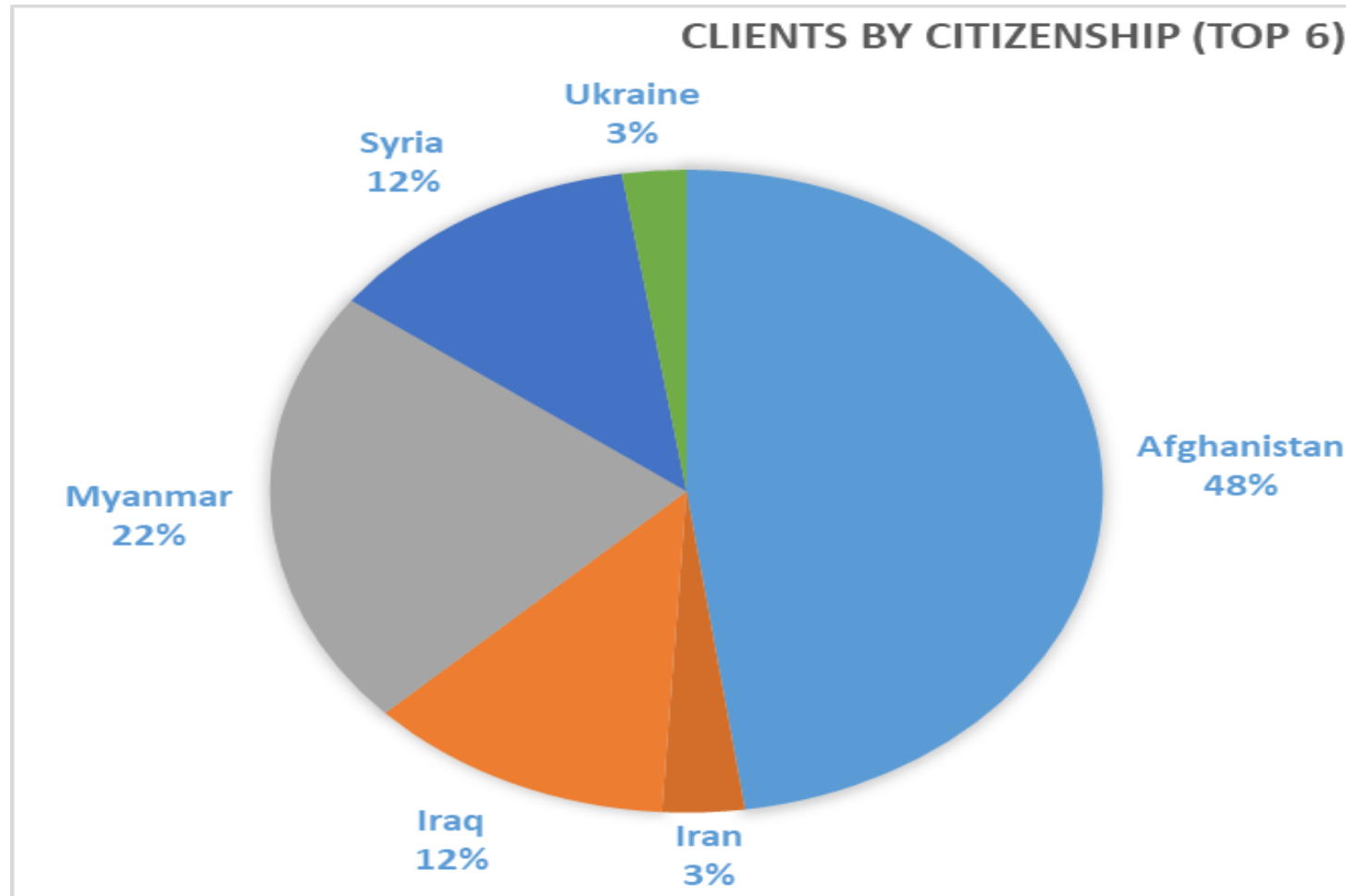


# Arrivals Victoria – 2023

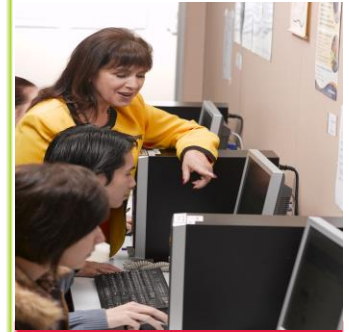
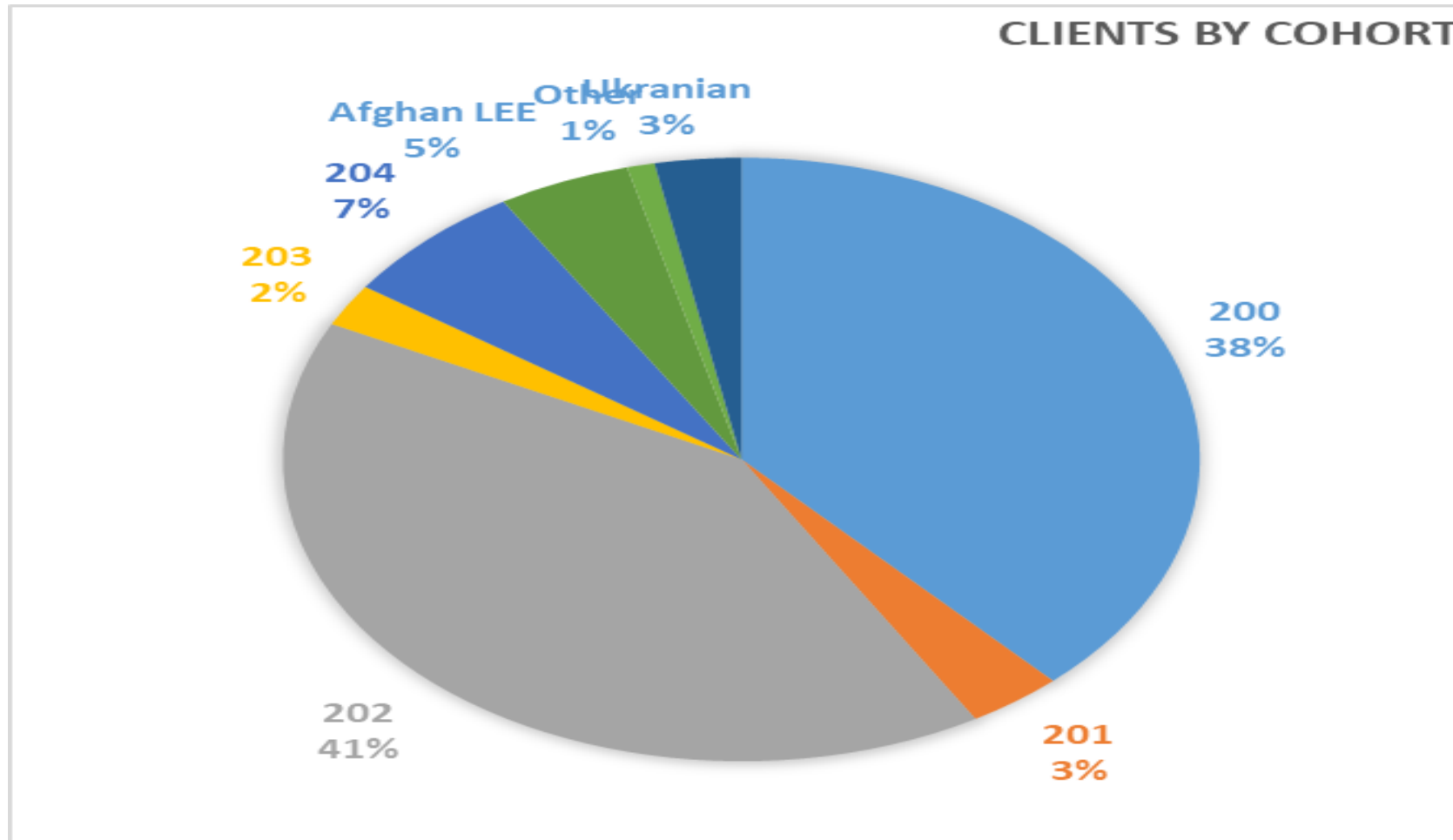
Area	Clients
Metro Melbourne - North	216
Metro Melbourne - South East	383
Metro Melbourne - West	108
Metro Melbourne - Ukrainian	24
Regional Victoria	140
Grand Total	871



# Clients by Citizenship



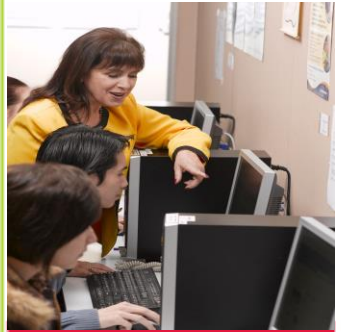
# Clients by Visa Subclass



# Key Issues

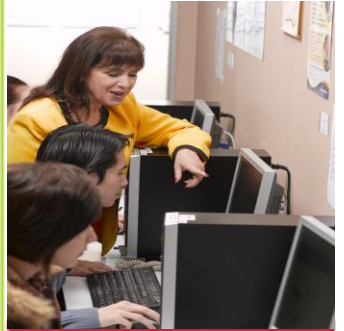
In the past 3 months, have you observed your clients face any barriers when accessing health services?

1. Medicare eligibility letter
2. GP's not accepting new patients
3. Bulk Billing and co-payment
4. Dental waitlist
5. Medical Centres not providing Interpreters





# Questions/Comments



# Victorian Settlement Data

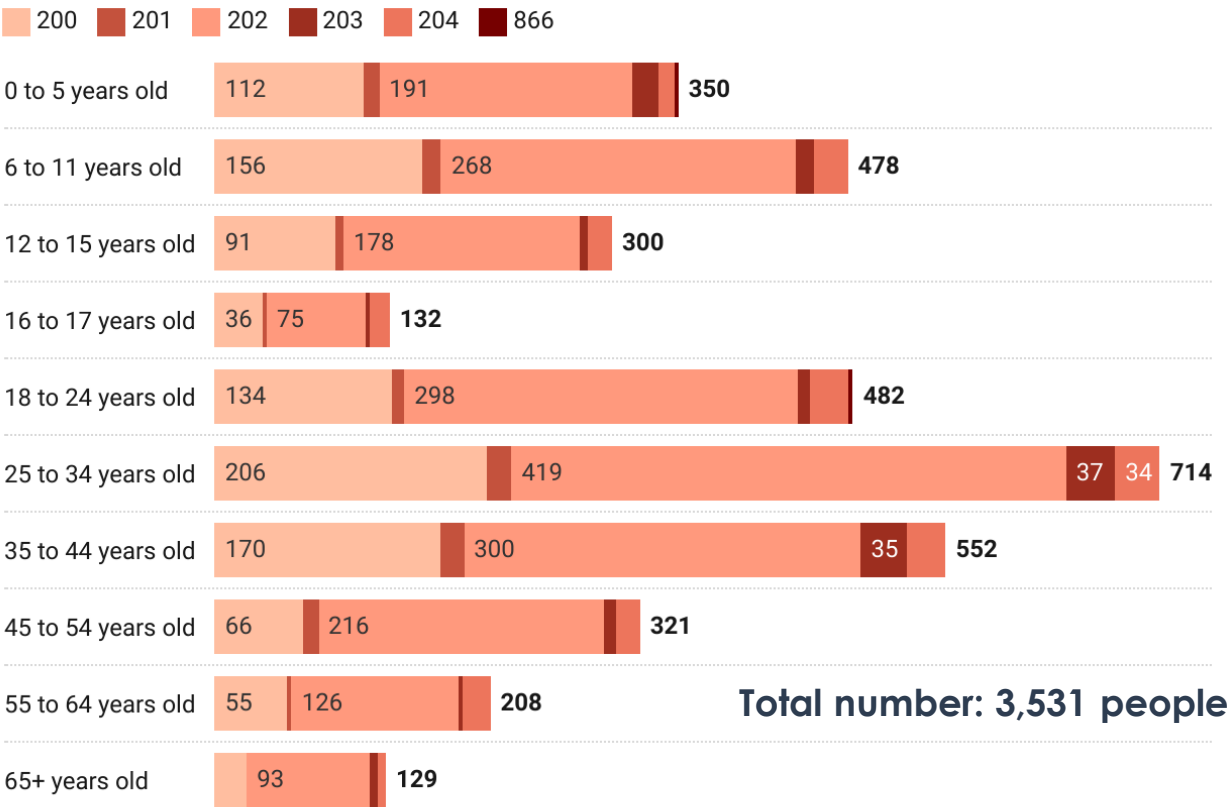
Victorian Refugee Health Network



# Settlement Data in Victoria

## Number of people who arrived in Australia in 2022 and currently reside in Victoria according to age group

Visa subclasses (200 series & 866) with a Date of Arrival between 01/01/2022 and 31/12/2022 and are currently recorded as residing in Victoria as at 04/01/2023



\* These figures are approximations as any cells that have been suppressed (<5) were changed to a numerical value (3) to present data in this map.

Chart: Victorian Refugee Health Network • Source: Department of Home Affairs Settlement Database • Created with Datawrapper

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

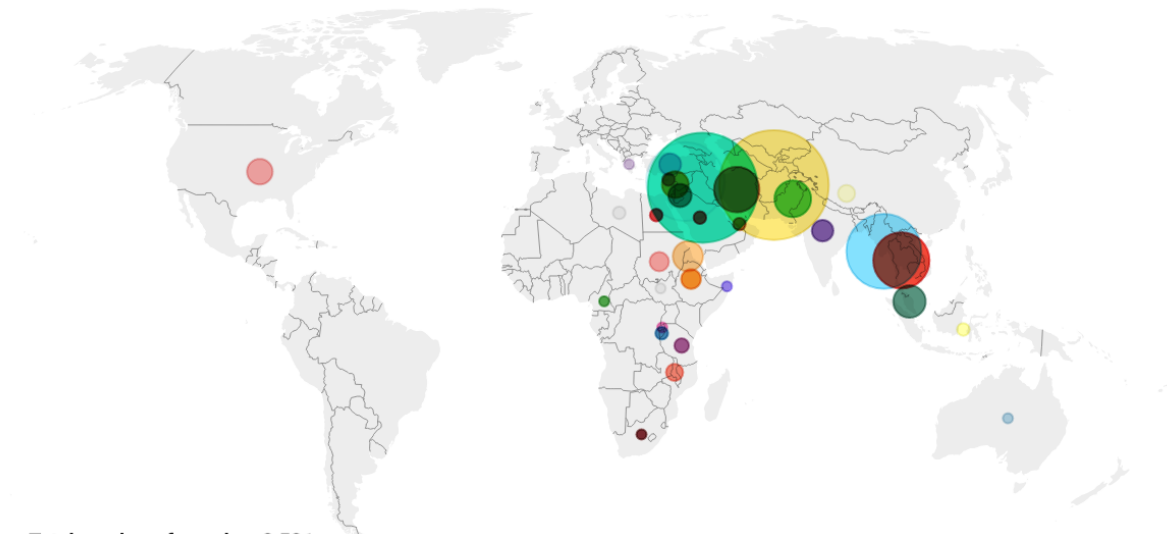
Visa Subclass	Details:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Refugee Visa (200)</li><li>In Country Special Humanitarian (201)</li><li>Emergency Rescue (203)</li><li>Women at Risk (204)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Permanent Stay</li><li>✓ With these visas you can move to Australia 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</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Global Special Humanitarian visa (202)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Permanent Stay</li><li>✓ 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.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Protection Visa (866)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Permanent Stay</li><li>✓ This visa is for people who arrived in Australia on a valid visa and want to seek asylum. It lets you stay in Australia permanently, if you engage Australia's protection obligations and meet all other requirements for the grant of the visa.</li></ul>

# Settlement Data in Victoria

## Country of Birth - Humanitarian Settlers who reside in Victoria and arrived in 2022

People on Refugee Category Visas (200 series) with a Date of Arrival between 01/01/2022 and 31/12/2022 are currently recorded as residing in Victoria as at 04/01/2023

- AFGHANISTAN
- AUSTRALIA
- BURUNDI
- CAMBODIA
- CAMEROON
- CONGO, DEM REPUBLIC OF THE
- EGYPT
- ERITREA
- ETHIOPIA
- GREECE
- INDIA
- INDONESIA
- IRAN
- IRAQ
- JORDAN
- LEBANON
- LIBYA
- MALAWI
- MALAYSIA
- MYANMAR
- PAKISTAN
- REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
- RWANDA
- SAUDI ARABIA
- SOMALIA
- SOUTH AFRICA
- SUDAN
- SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
- TANZANIA
- THAILAND
- TIBET (SO STATED)
- TURKEY
- UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
- YEMEN, REPUBLIC OF



Total number of people = 3,531

\* These figures are approximations as any cells that have been suppressed (<5) were changed to a numerical value (3) to present data in this map.

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 series & 866)	202 Visa Subclass
IRAQ	916	750
AFGHANISTAN	910	301
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	454	259
MYANMAR	410	275
THAILAND	222	199
IRAN	140	87
PAKISTAN	87	29
MALAYSIA	66	54
ERITREA	56	53
LEBANON	42	22
CONGO, DEM REPUBLIC OF THE	38	7
JORDAN	30	22
TURKEY	26	3
INDIA	25	25
ETHIOPIA	20	15
Total Number of people	3,531 people	

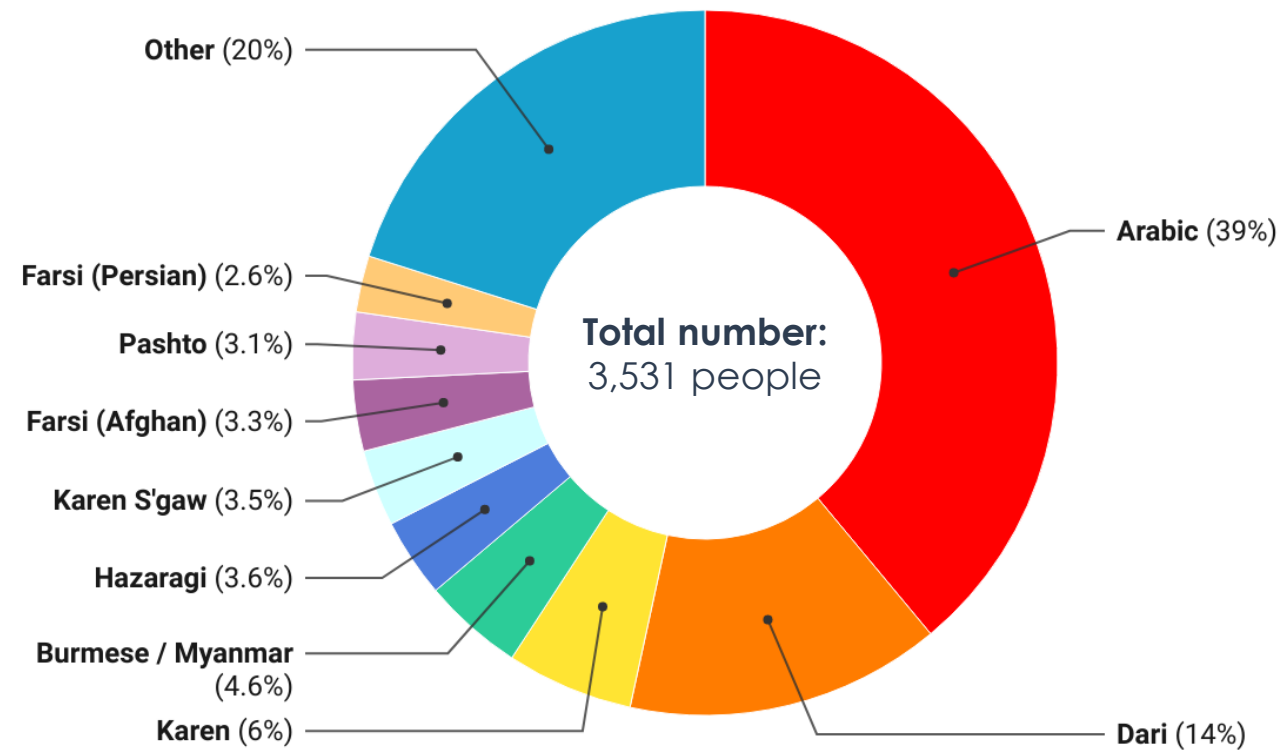
\* This data does not include those on Bridging visas or temporary protection visas (TPV, SHEV, 449, 786).

Link to interactive map: <https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/sx0vl/1/>

# Settlement Data in Victoria

## Main Language Spoken for those who arrived in 2022

People on Visa subclass (200 series & 866) who arrived in Australia between 01/01/2022 and 31/12/2022 and are currently recorded as residing in Victoria as at 04/01/2023



*\* These figures are approximations as any cells that have been suppressed (<5) were changed to a numerical value (3) to present data in this map.*

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

# Settlement Data in Victoria

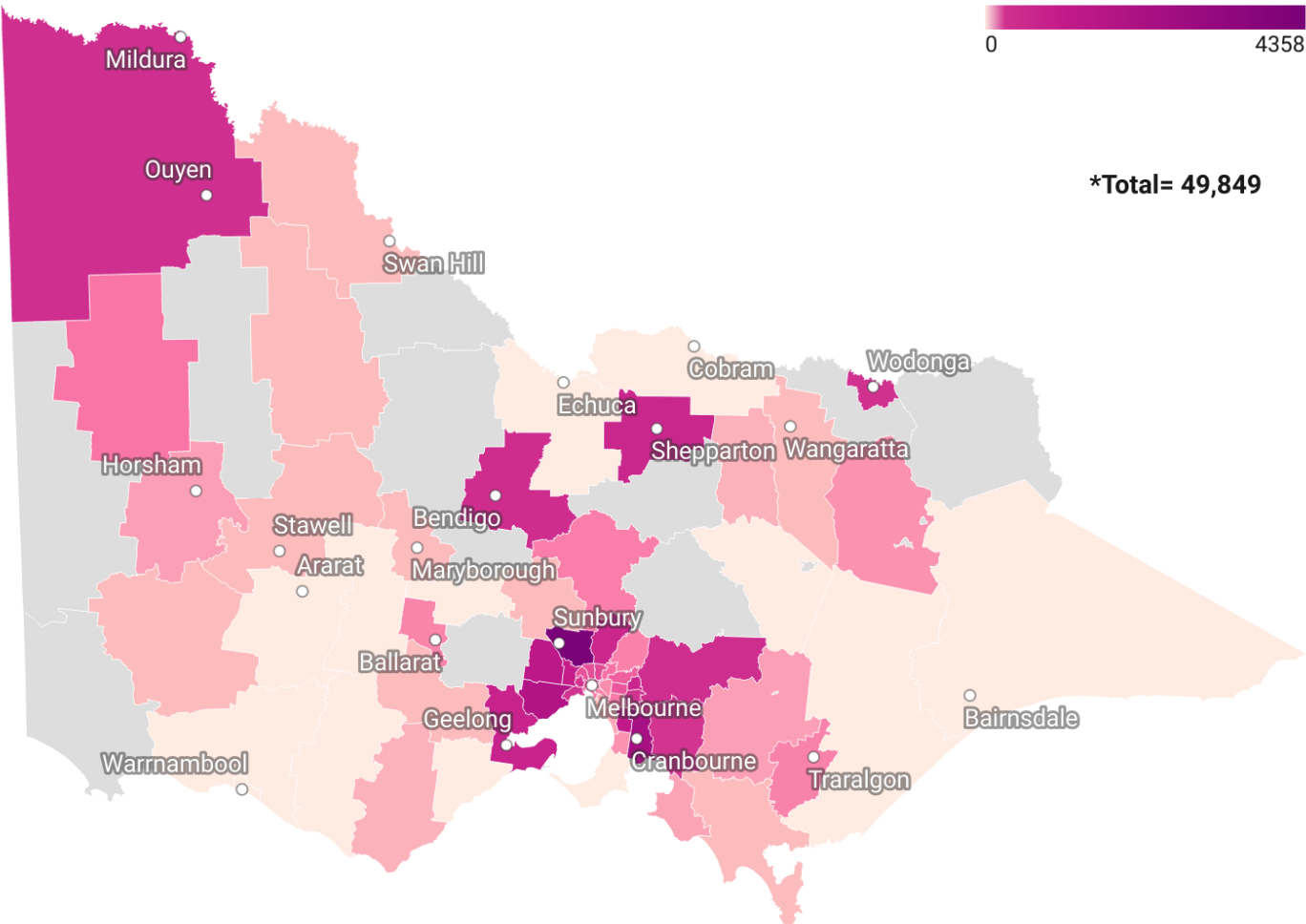
Top 10 Settlement Areas who arrived in the past 10 years

Local Government Area	Number of arrivals (Visa Subclass 200s series & 866)
Hume	12,876
Casey	5,948
Wyndham	4,474
Greater Dandenong	
Melton	3,955
Brimbank	2,604
Whittlesea	2,437
Maroondah	1,693
Greater Geelong	1,563
Greater Bendigo	1,065

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

## Humanitarian settlers in Victorian Local Government Areas over the last 10 years

Humanitarian settlers with a Date of Arrival between 01/01/2012 and 31/12/2022 and are currently recorded as residing in Victoria as at 04/01/2023



\*573 Humanitarian settlers had not recorded their LGA

\* These figures are approximations as any cells that have been suppressed (<5) were changed to a numerical value (3) to present data in this map.

Map: Victorian Refugee Health Network • Source: Australian Government- Settlement Database • Map data: ABS • Created with Datawrapper

Link to interactive map: <https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/j7ErY/3/>

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/library/publications/>



# Evaluating twelve years of supporting health literacy



Monique van Cauwenberghe  
*The Water Well Project*







The Water Well Project

2011-2022

# Evaluating twelve years of supporting health literacy

A review and evaluation of the past twelve years of The Water Well Project's health education sessions for communities from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds



## We are The Water Well Project

**Vision:** To ensure all communities from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds achieve equitable access to healthcare

**Purpose:** To promote good health and wellbeing to communities from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds in Australia by improving their health literacy

### Values:

- Collaboration
- Compassion
- Respectfulness
- Integrity
- Accountability





# The Water Well Project Snapshot 2011-2022 (Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania)

**1252**

SESSIONS FACILITATED



**17000+**

SESSION COMMUNITY  
PARTICIPANTS



**186**

PARTNER COMMUNITY  
ORGANISATIONS



**48**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AREAS (LGA)



**41**

LANGUAGES SPOKEN  
WITHIN SESSIONS



**85**

UNIQUE HEALTH TOPICS



**839**


VOLUNTEER HEALTHCARE  
PROFESSIONALS



## Methodology

Following each health education session, we collate feedback using a mixed-methods approach from:

1. Our community participants
2. Our community representatives
3. Our volunteer healthcare professionals



*“This session gave me a better understanding of the values and beliefs of individuals from CALD backgrounds. It made me realise the importance of taking the time to listen to their stories, in order to build rapport with patients/individuals from CALD backgrounds. I think the session was great today. I really enjoyed it.” (Volunteer Healthcare Professional, Healthy Eating and Nutrition session, 7/11/2022).*





The Water Well Project

# The Water Well Project and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

**3** GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



**5** GENDER  
EQUALITY



**10** REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES

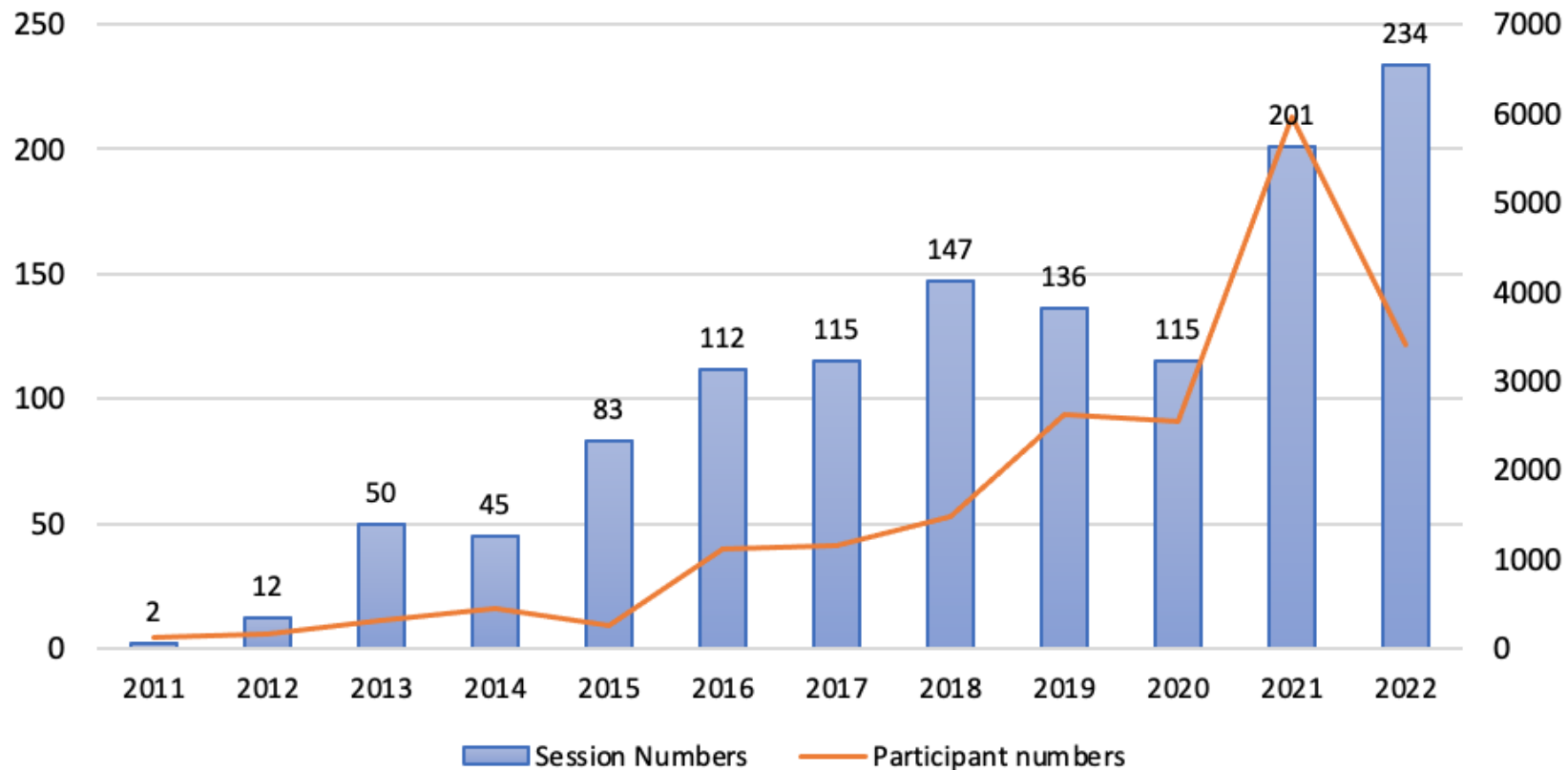


**17** PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



## 12 years of evaluating health education sessions

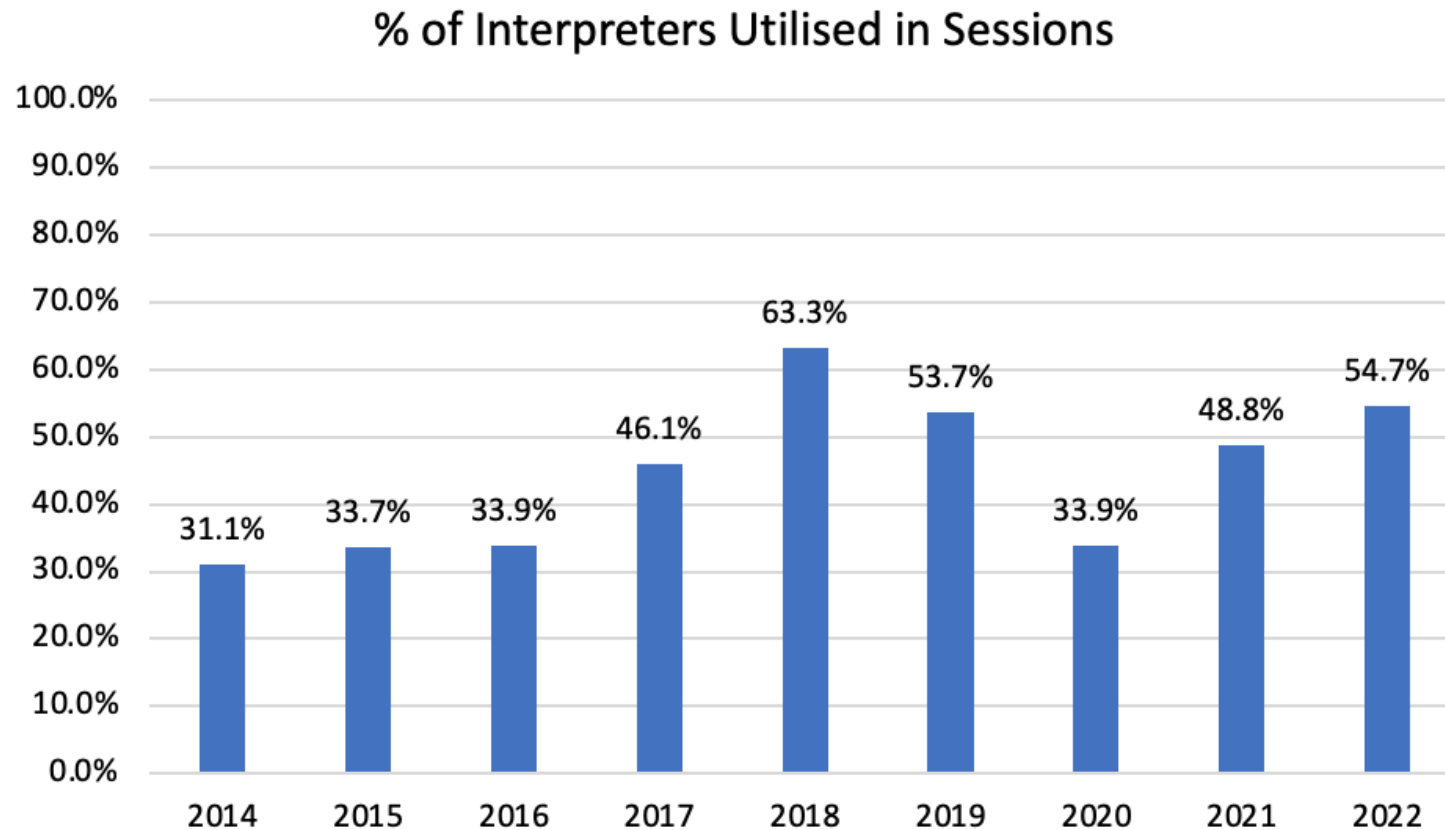
Session & Participant Numbers





# Languages and Interpreter Utilisation

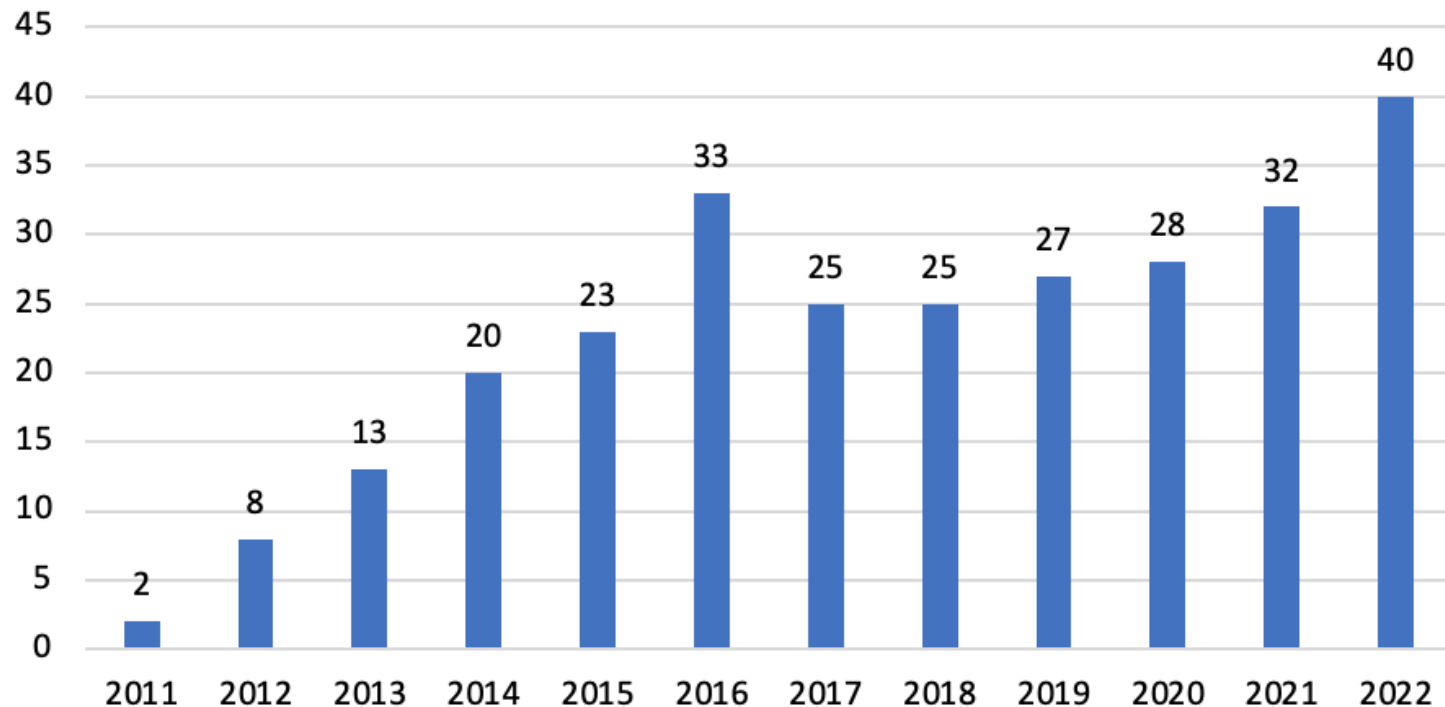
On average 47.5% of health education sessions required interpreting services



## Health Topics

Over the 12 years, **The Water Well Project** has delivered sessions on **85 different health topics** that have been refined throughout the years to become more succinct

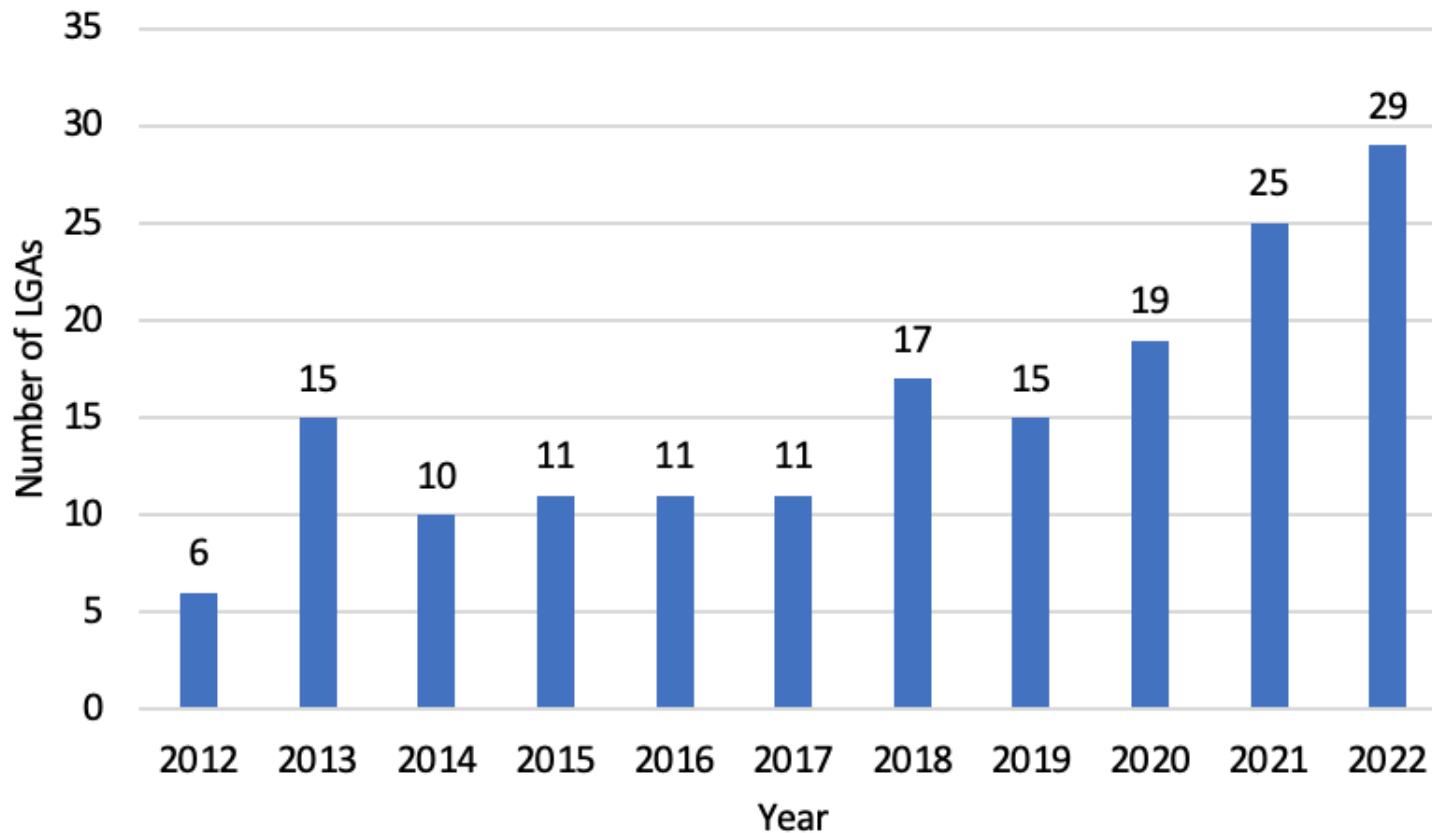
Health Topics Delivered Per Year





## Local Government Areas (LGAs)

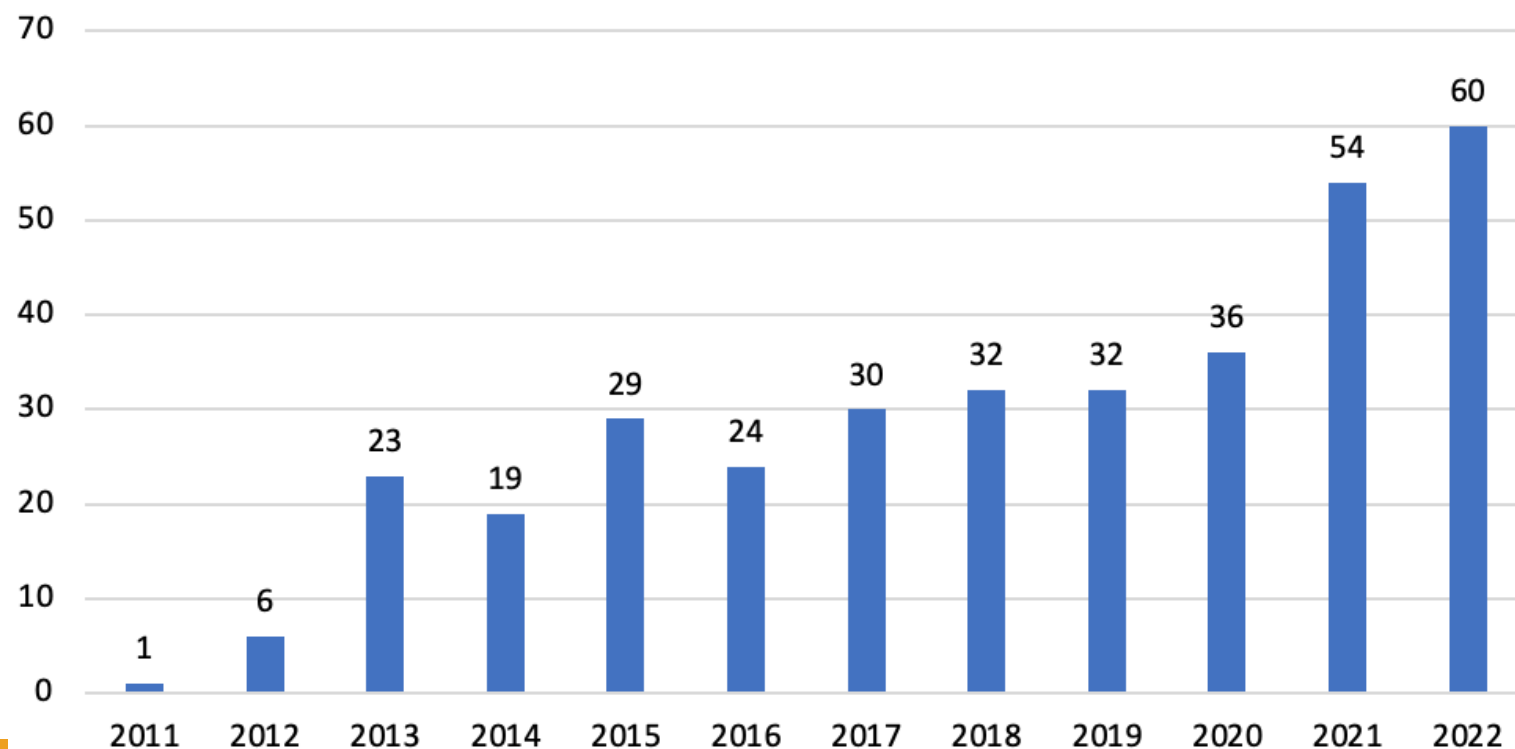
Number of LGAs reached per year



## Community Partner Organisations

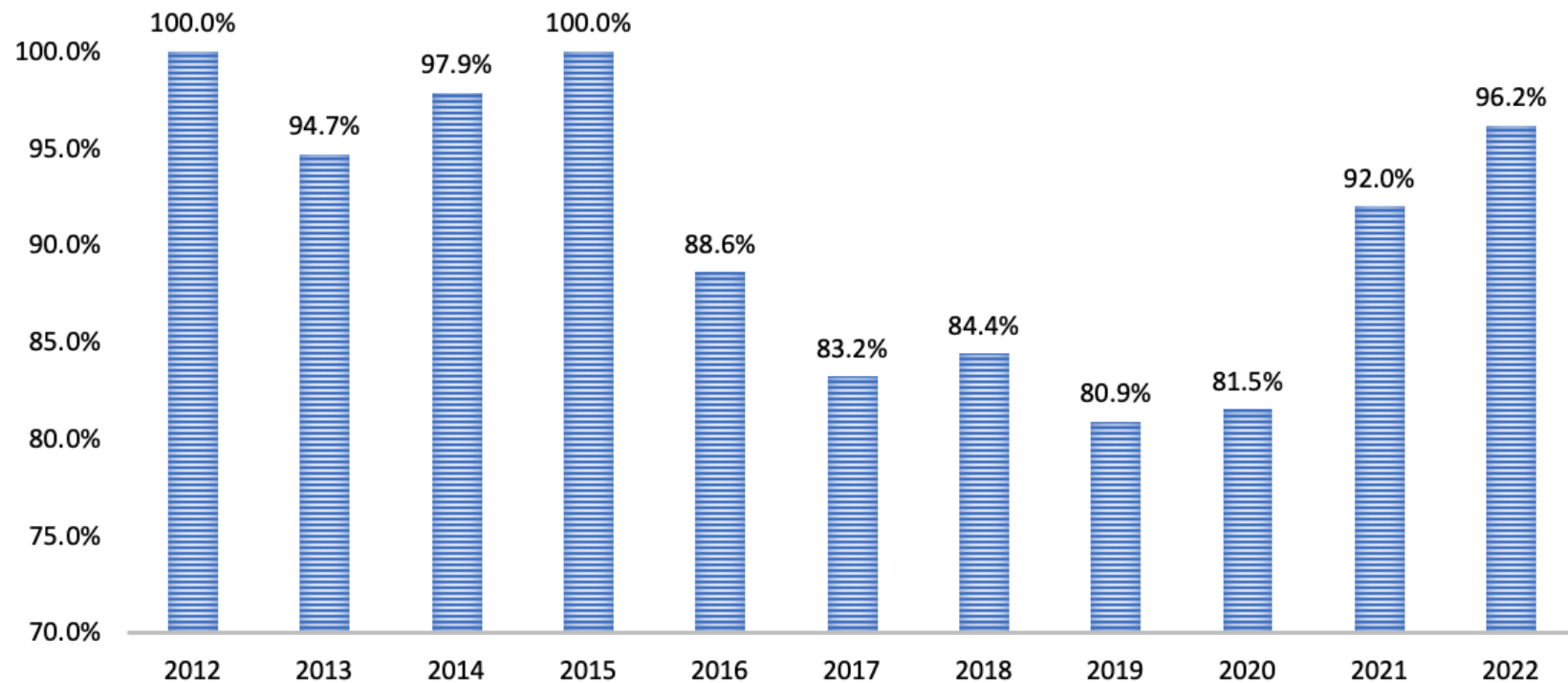
Between 2011 to 2022, The Water Well Project has delivered health education sessions in collaboration with **186 Community Partner Organisations**

Yearly Number of Community Organisations



# Community Participant Feedback

## TOWARDS IMPROVING HEALTH CAPACITY





# Volunteer Healthcare Professionals

The Water Well Project has **267 active healthcare professionals** volunteers across Victoria (64%), NSW (26%), Tasmania (8%) and other (2%).


## Languages include:

- Arabic
- Mandarin
- Hazaragi
- Dari
- Somali

## Backgrounds include:

- Chinese
- Hazara
- Lebanese
- Somali
- Vietnamese

Our active volunteer healthcare professionals come from **47 different cultural backgrounds** and collectively speak **42 different languages**



*"I found it a great session that seemed to be very well received. As my first session with The Water Well Project it really highlighted to me how very basic health information, that we so easily take for granted, is so valuable to and appreciated by these groups."* (Volunteer Healthcare Professional, Karen and Burmese parent group, 11/9/2015).

Visit our website by  
scanning this QR code



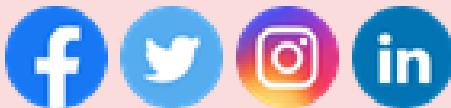
[projectadmin@thewaterwellproject.org](mailto:projectadmin@thewaterwellproject.org)



[www.thewaterwellproject.org](http://www.thewaterwellproject.org)



0402 270 383



# Questions?





# Partners in Wellbeing

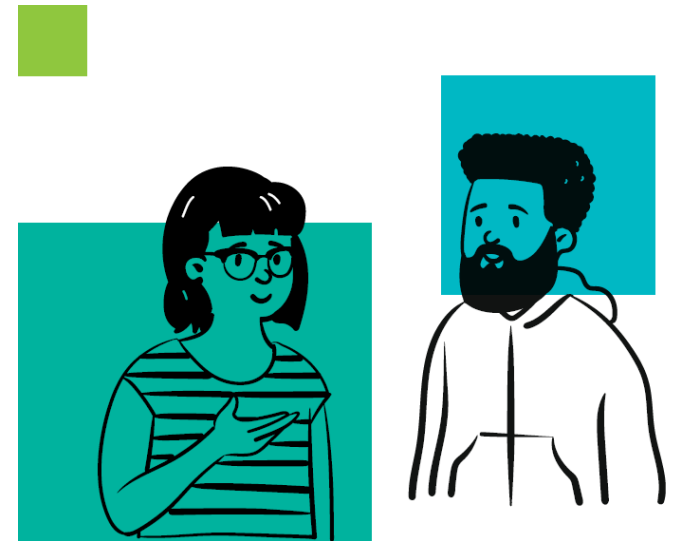
Aditya Somayajula  
*NEAMI National*



# Partners in Wellbeing

Supporting individuals and small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Partners in  
**Wellbeing**



In partnership with



# Acknowledgement Of Country

Partners in Wellbeing acknowledges that our work in the community takes place on the Traditional Lands of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and therefore respectfully recognise their Elders, past and present, as well as the ongoing Custodianship of the Land and Water by all Members of these Communities.





# Partners in **Wellbeing**



## Free support

Partners in Wellbeing provides free and confidential support for individual, carers, veterans, sole traders, small business owners, their employees and families. To be eligible, a person must be 16 years and older and experiencing increased life/ business challenges, stress and anxiety and/or low mood and poor wellbeing.

Services offered include:

- Financial Counselling
- Business Advisory Service
- Wellbeing Support

Partners in Wellbeing is funded by the Victorian Government and is delivered in partnership with ACSO, EACH, Financial Counselling Victoria, Melbourne Innovation Centre and

Neami National.

In partnership with



# Eligibility Exclusions

- Cannot be a participant receiving NDIS support (MH package)
- Cannot be case managed through an Area Mental Health Service (excl. of brief intervention teams/services)
- Cannot be linked in with a Primary Health Network funded program – like Psychosocial Support Service
- Cannot be residing outside of Victoria

# Wellbeing Support

We provide tailored mental health support through wellbeing coaching to help manage professional and personal issues and to improve personal and emotional wellbeing:

- Wellbeing coaching and check-ins
- Flexible, short to medium term, one to one support
- Support to explore/develop strategies, new routines and wellness planning.
- Referral to appropriate local support services and useful resources
- Connect to local, sustainable supports (GP, psychologist, carer programs, NDIS supports).

# Financial Counselling

Financial Counselling is a free, independent and confidential service. Qualified financial counsellors provide advice, information and support to help small businesses manage debt and financial issues.

Financial counsellors help small businesses with:

- Understand the viability of a small business, as well as the small business owner's personal financial position
- Facilitate access to any support measures offered by state and federal governments or industry
- Refer to other specialist services, including legal, insolvency and mediation
- Negotiate with creditors including insurers, lenders, and dispute resolution schemes, to try and reach sustainable outcomes
- Understand options relating to managing debt, including payment arrangements, contract variations and insolvency/bankruptcy

# Business Advisory Service

The business advisory service provides professional and practical support for small business owners.

Qualified expert business advisers help to develop clear plans and actions to address critical challenges and opportunities within your business. Assistance is available across a range of areas including, but not limited to:

- Marketing and sales
- Digital business
- Human resource management
- Financial management and business strategic planning
- Improving efficiency
- Risk management
- Business expansion
- Business closure

# Service Model: One Service, Three Providers

Partners in Wellbeing is delivered by Neami, Each & ACSO

1300 375 330

(Mon-Fri 9am-10pm & 9am-5pm Weekends)

[www.partnersinwellbeing.org.au](http://www.partnersinwellbeing.org.au)



Interpreter services available

Partners in  
**Wellbeing**

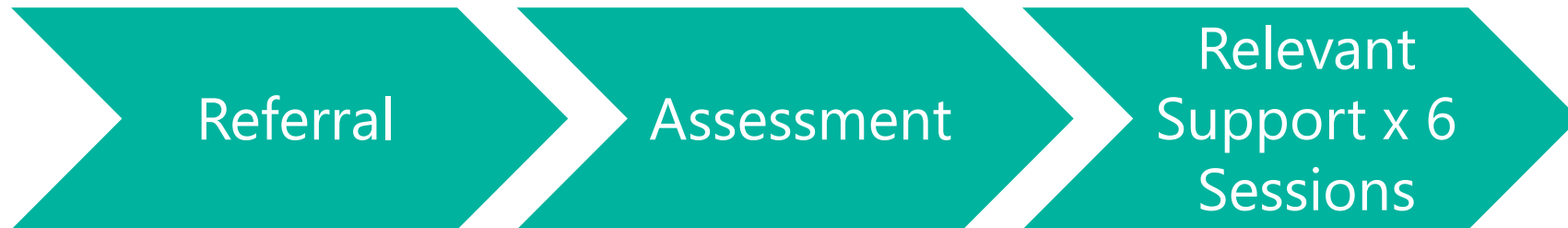


# What to Expect When you Call

Call 1300 375 330

Key in postcode

Select: 1 for wellbeing support, 2 for small business support or 3 for Veteran support



Note: Free access to those that don't have Medicare or visa's

Partners in  
**Wellbeing**



# Our Workforce

- Experienced Mental Health support workers with a range of experience within the field (including Social Work, Nursing, OT backgrounds etc.)
- Lived/living experience workers (Mental health recovery, Carers, Veterans)
- Interpreters available
- Some bilingual staff
- Financial Counsellors/Business Mentors

Note: Staff are not counsellors or crisis support workers.

They are experienced 'wellbeing coaches' (for the purposes of the program) who have expertise in supporting those experiencing mental health symptoms. If the person would like support to link in with qualified Counsellors/Psychologist, the worker can provide this linkage as part of the work.

Partners in  
**Wellbeing**





# Our work in the CALD space

- Partnerships with transcultural and ethno-specific organizations, community leaders, faith-based leaders etc. to address barriers to accessing mental health services as well as service navigation.
- Pop up Information stalls about PIW (leisure centres, places of worship, markets, multicultural events, festivals, shopping centres)
- In-language resources found on our website (42 languages)
- Community education sessions/ group wellbeing workshops
- CALD Advisory group- conversations and input from bi-cultural leaders on improving engagement practices

# Partners in Wellbeing: Referral Process

We only accept written referrals via Professionals. This can be submitted directly via email or fax

*Information available on PDF Referral*

Self-referrals accepted via phone

1300 375 330

Accepting referrals until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023

EACH

Email enquiries: [partnersinwellbeing@each.com.au](mailto:partnersinwellbeing@each.com.au)

Neami National

Email enquiries: [partnersinwellbeing@neaminational.org.au](mailto:partnersinwellbeing@neaminational.org.au)

ACSO

Email enquiries: [partnersinwellbeing@acso.org.au](mailto:partnersinwellbeing@acso.org.au)

Website: [partnersinwellbeing.org.au](http://partnersinwellbeing.org.au)

Prioritisation for those in vulnerable situations:

- Lack of finance for food/data/medication/homeless
- People impacted by Family Violence
- Mandatory isolation (either tested positive or need to remain awaiting results)

Partners in  
**Wellbeing**



# Questions?

Aditya Somayajula  
CALD engagement worker  
0457725054

[Aditya.somayajula@neaminational.org.au](mailto:Aditya.somayajula@neaminational.org.au)





victorian refugee  
health network

## Rural/Regional Working Group

March 2023

# Rural/Regional Working Group

## Overview:

With a high number of people settling in rural/regional areas, it is important to monitor, capture and have regular updates on health access issues for areas outside metropolitan areas. This year, the Network has established a Rural and Regional working group to ensure there is adequate representation in these Statewide Meetings on matters from across the State.

In this group the Network has met with representatives from Bendigo, Grampians, Barwon, Goulburn Valley Shepparton, Albury/Wodonga, Gippsland, Sunraysia Mallee Mildura and Swan Hill to:

- Understand the key issues impacting regional settlement in Victoria: what is working well, the challenges health and community services are facing, general information sharing and to identify common themes affecting services in these regions.
- To ensure that regional and rural service access issues are represented in the Networks pieces of advocacy to help improve health access for refugee communities across Victoria.



## Top 3 areas of concern

1. **GP access** issues
2. Challenges with **accessing specialists' services** in rural/ regional areas (Transport to appointment to metro areas required)
3. **Workforce development** for services to be better equipped to work with people of refugee background

# 1. Area of Concern: GP Access issues

## Case Study:

*"I have called 10 GPs in the Highton/Belmont/CBD area to get a family a GP appointment. Unfortunately, there were no bulk billing GP clinics that would use interpreters (very disappointing)."*  
(Community Health Nurse)

- Precarious access for GPs in rural/regional areas with some areas only having one GP who uses an interpreter.
- Many clinics are closing their books for bulkbilling and there are limited options of GPs who work with the refugee and asylum seeker population.

## 2. Area of Concern: Access to specialists' services

- There are shortages of public specialists who are practicing locally in rural/regional areas. The option to go to a public hospital or other specialist appointments in Melbourne is challenging.

### Challenges with transport to appointments in metro areas.

- Community members require support traveling to medical appointments in Melbourne given the limited access options to specialist services in rural/regional areas.
- There are additional financial costs associated with travelling to medical appointments in metro areas.
- People who have newly arrived who require Melbourne based appointments and are unable to navigate trains, buses and the hospital system on arrival.
- Bi-lingual staff assist to navigate this process. This takes a whole day- unbudgeted.
- No car or licences

### 3. Area of Concern: Workforce development- Services to be better equipped to work with people from refugee backgrounds.

- Culturally appropriate health information is not being consistently used in all health settings. (E.g., a client was not offered or provided an interpreter in the hospital setting following surgery).
- Health providers require resources and training to adequately respond to and understand the experiences and needs of clients from refugee backgrounds.
- Increased capacity in settlement to build health literacy
- A minimum standard of training merits for all health services are required, including but not limited to the following areas:
  - o How to use interpreters (noting codes of conduct and ethical standards)
  - o Culturally safe and appropriate service provision
  - o Trauma informed practice standards
  - o Understanding the refugee experience



# Key actions taken to address these concerns.

*Some recent activities undertaken by the Network:*

- Representation at the Primary Health Network Cultural Diversity Community of Practice meetings
- Ministerial Correspondence – Victorian State Budget
- Mental Health Service System reforms
- Disability Service access issues- NDIA CALD Strategy & NDIS independent review
- Submission to the Coordinator General for Migrant Services

# Evaluation survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G7BNN6L>

**Next Meeting July 27<sup>th</sup> 2023**

Subscribe to become a Network member to receive notifications of upcoming meetings [here](#).



victorian refugee  
health network

Thank you for  
attending the VRHN  
State-wide Meeting!

March 2023