

Information Sheet

Humanitarian Youth Arrivals to Australia July 2008–June 2013

1. Introduction

1.1 The MYAN

The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) is the nationally recognised policy and advocacy body on multicultural youth issues. Auspiced by the Centre for Multicultural Youth in Victoria, the MYAN works in partnership with young people, government and non-government agencies at the state and national levels, to support a nationally consistent approach to addressing the needs of multicultural young people in policy and practice. The MYAN believes that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds have particular settlement needs and face a range of barriers in accessing the support they require to ensure their full participation in Australian society.

1.2 Background

This Information Sheet provides a general overview of the settlement trends for young people from refugee backgrounds in Australia. It also includes a brief overview of some of the issues impacting on migrant and humanitarian youth in Australia during the settlement process. These issues have been identified by the MYAN through its national policy and advocacy work.

The information presented is derived from statistics collated by the Department of Social Services (DSS) based on the data records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian Programme¹ as at 4th October 2013. Statistics have been sourced from DSS's online Settlement Reporting Facility (SRF), which primarily uses on-arrival data supplemented by data from the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), Medicare and other relevant sources.

It is important to note that:

- The term 'young people' refers to those aged between 12 to 24 years of age - data available through the SRF only allows a breakdown of 12–24 years;
- Data displayed as year of arrival in Australia was extracted from the SRF as of 4 October 2013 and all data presented is accurate at this date;
- Many young people and their families move between states in the months and years after first arriving in Australia. The data reflects young people having resided in these states as at 4th October 2013. Given the mobility of many newly arrived young people and the challenges of maintaining up-to-date data in this area, the data provided in this Info Sheet should be

1 The Humanitarian Programme is comprised of two components – the Onshore and Offshore arrival programmes. Successful applicants through the Onshore Programme are granted an 866 visa. Approximately 31 % of the 71043 humanitarian arrivals, arrived through the Onshore Programme, under visa sub-class between July 2008 and June 2013. For more information see <http://www.immi.gov.au/visas/humanitarian/>

In recent years Australia settled approximately 13,750 people each year under its Humanitarian Programme, with the numbers increasing to 20,000 for 2012-13 under the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers released on 13 August 2012. However, Australia's intake has recently reverted to 13,750 people each year. This Information Sheet pertains to both off-shore and onshore humanitarian visa holders. For more information on Australia's Humanitarian Programme, go to <http://www.immi.gov.au/visas/humanitarian/>

considered as a guide only;

- The statistics refer to financial years and not calendar years; and
- The visa sub-classes included are 200; 201 202; 203; 204; and 866.²

Young people and their families move for a variety of reasons, including:

- Housing affordability and availability;
- Educational and employment opportunities (including in rural and regional areas);
- Accessible services and community support networks; and
- Proximity to family and friends.

2. Arrival numbers, country of birth and settlement locations

2.1 How many young people from refugee backgrounds are arriving in Australia?

20540 young people aged between 12 and 24 years arrived in Australia through Australia's Humanitarian Programme over the last five years, between 1st July 2008 and 30th June 2013—comprising 29% of the total 71403 humanitarian arrivals in this period.

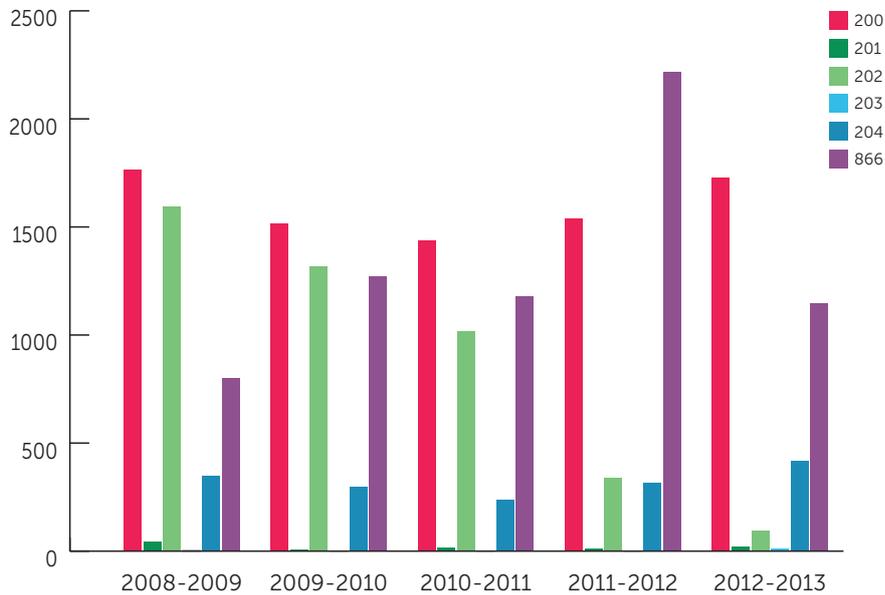
Of these, approximately 31% arrived through the Onshore Programme, under visa 866. This represents 26% of the overall intake under the visa sub-class 866 in Australia. The number of arrivals under the 866 visa sub-class has ebbed and flowed between 2008 and 2013. This group of young people will have spent some time in immigration detention, including the community detention program, while awaiting an outcome of their claim for protection.

Figure 1 below presents the number of young people arriving in Australia aged 12–24 years between 2009 and 2013. 4509 young people aged between 12 and 24 settled in Australia during the 2008–2009 financial year under the Humanitarian Programme, compared with a total of 3420 young people during the 2012–2013 financial year. This represents a 24% decrease in the number of young people arriving in Australia over the past five years, and reflects a gradual decline in the overall number and proportion of young people settling in Australia under the Humanitarian Programme³.

² Although there are other visa sub-classes through which young people arrive in Australia with refugee-like experiences i.e. 117 visa (Orphan Relative) and 115 visa (Remaining Relative), the above visa sub-classes are the only visas under the Humanitarian Programme.

³ Please note, as Figure 1 shows, the numbers of young people arriving on 201 and 203 visas are very small. The total number for the 201 visa sub-class between 2009 and 2013 is 102 and for the 203 visa sub-class, the total number is 14.

Figure 1: Number of humanitarian youth arrivals aged 12 to 24 years between 2008 and 2013 by visa category



2.2 Where are young people from refugee backgrounds coming from?

Country of Birth

Table 1 below presents data on the numbers of young people arriving between 2008 and 2013 by country of birth. Young people from Iraq, Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) and Afghanistan represent the largest number of arrivals within the Humanitarian Programme for the age group 12–24 years arriving in the last 5 years between 1st July 2008 and 30th June 2013. Young people from these three countries have represented the highest number of new arrivals to Australia aged between 12 to 24 years of age.

In the 2008-2009 financial year, Iraq, Afghanistan and Myanmar⁴ were the top three countries of birth - the same top three countries for the 2012-2013 financial year. Combined, they represent 47% of the young people aged 12 to 24 between 2008 and 2013, or 9790 people out of a total of 20,710 young people. However, we see a gradual decline in the number of arrivals of young people from Iraq, from 974 people in the 2008-2009 financial year to 707 in the 2012-2013 financial year. In contrast, the number of young people from Afghanistan and Myanmar has been increasing. Young people from Afghanistan make up by far the largest single group of humanitarian youth in Australia from 2008-2013 - 4028 of a total of 20718 young people, representing 19% of the total intake of the top ten country of birth.

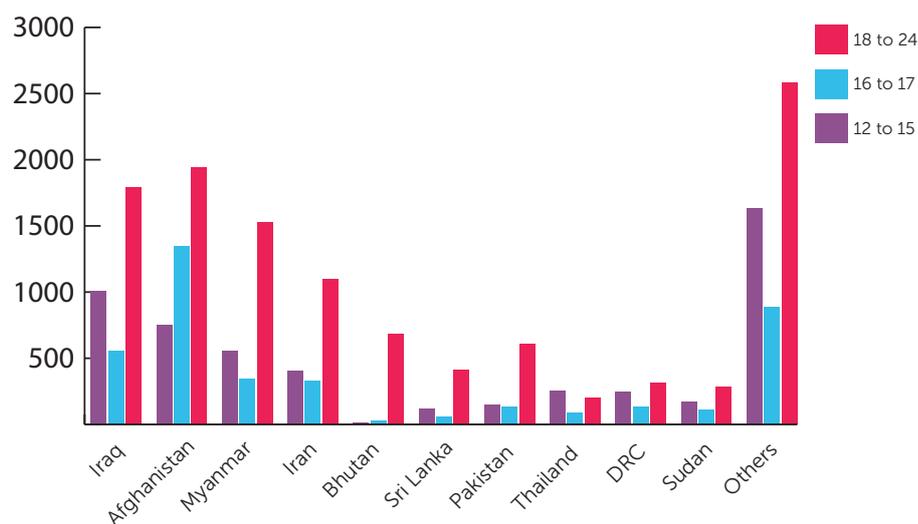
Additionally, there are fewer young people arriving in Australia in the last five years from African countries. Those that come from African countries primarily come from the Democratic Republic of Congo (684) and Sudan (564), with these groups comprising 3.3% and 2.7% respectively of the intake of young people arriving over the last five years.

⁴ The SRF uses 'Myanmar' rather 'Burma'.

Table 1: Country of birth numbers of humanitarian youth arrivals between 2008 and 2013 by age group

Country of Birth (Settlement)	Age on Arrival			
	12-15	16-17	18-24	Total
Afghanistan	747	1344	1937	4028
Iraq	1006	553	1788	3347
Myanmar	555	345	1523	2423
Iran	406	328	1110	1844
Pakistan	145	135	605	885
Bhutan	8	30	682	720
Democratic Republic of Congo	242	129	313	684
Sri Lanka	118	59	407	584
Sudan	168	168	168	564
Thailand	255	89	201	545
Others	1632	884	2578	5094
Total	5282	4006	11,430	20,718

Figure 2: Top 10 Countries of birth for humanitarian youth arrivals between 2008 and 2013 by age group



2.3 Where are young people from refugee backgrounds settling in Australia?

Table 2 presents the number of young people aged 12–24 arriving in Australia between July 2008 and June 2013 by state and age breakdown. New South Wales

and Victoria have the highest settlement numbers overall, followed by Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. Of the humanitarian youth entrants arriving in Australia in the last five years, 6572 settled in Victoria and 5774 settled in New South Wales. Combined, these two states settled approximately 60% of young people aged 12 to 24.

These two states have traditionally been the highest settlement states. However, there has been a decline in the number of young people settling in New South Wales and Victoria, from 1430 young people in the 2008–2009 financial year to 990 young people in the 2012–2013 financial year in New South Wales. In the 2008–2009 financial year 1366 young people settled in Victoria while there were 1190 young people in the 2012–2013 financial year. This reflects the overall trend of declining numbers of young people settling in Australia through the Humanitarian Programme over the last five years.

Table 2: Number of humanitarian youth arrival between 2008 and 2013 by state and age group

Age on Arrival	State 2008-2013									
	VIC	NSW	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	ACT	NT	EXT	Total
12-15	1567	1471	787	670	496	184	48	34	22	5279
16-17	1285	941	685	523	373	92	38	22	46	4005
18-24	3720	3362	1478	1173	1156	259	135	100	4	11387
Total	6572	5774	2950	2366	2025	535	221	156	72	20671

Young people aged 18-24 years represent the highest number of humanitarian youth arrivals in Australia compared to young people aged 12-17 years. They represent more than 55% of all young people arriving in Australia through the Humanitarian Programme, with the exception of Tasmania, South Australia and Queensland. Young people in this age group often face particular challenges in accessing the services and support they need, as they may no longer be eligible for some youth services or programs and are expected to engage with the adult service system.

3. What are some of the characteristics and experiences of young people from refugee backgrounds?

3.1 Gender

Table 3 presents the number of humanitarian youth arrivals by gender and age group. Six out of ten humanitarian youth arrivals to Australia in the last five years were male - 60% or 12552, compared with 39% or 8104 young women. There has been a notable increase in the proportion of young males arriving in Australia as humanitarian entrants over the last five years, while the number of young females has been gradually decreasing.

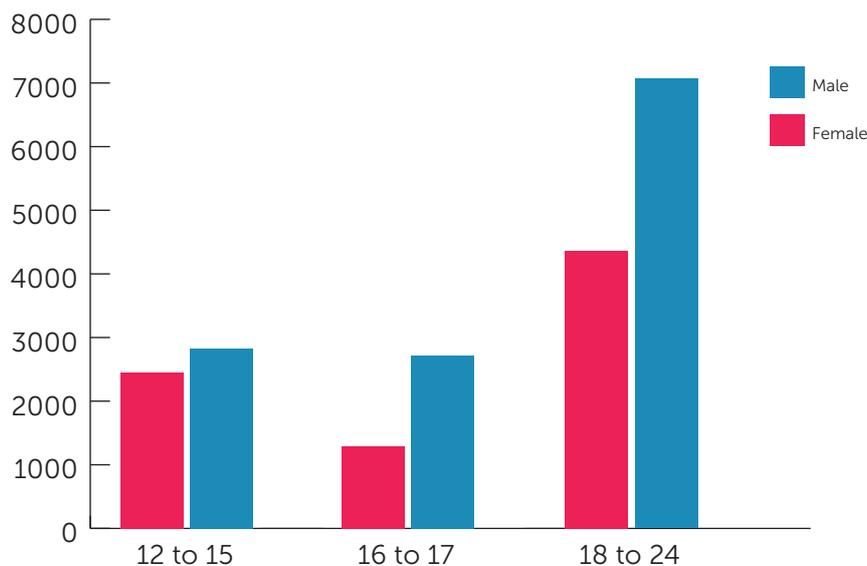
During the 2008-2009 financial year 52% or 3281 of young people were males and 48% or 3081 young people were female. During the 2012-2013 financial year there were 2165 young males, or 63%, and 1254 young females or 37% of

all humanitarian entrants. This reflects the increased number of young males who have arrived through the Onshore Programme on 866 visas.

Table 3: Number of humanitarian youth arrivals between 2008 and 2013 by gender and age group

Gender	Age on Arrival			Total
	12-15	16-17	18-24	
Female	2452	1290	4362	8104
Male	2830	2716	7006	12552
Not recorded	0	0	2	2
Total	5282	4006	11370	20658

Figure 3: Number of humanitarian youth arrivals between 2008 and 2013 by gender and age group



3.2 Languages spoken

Table 4 presents the Top 10 languages spoken by humanitarian youth arrivals between 2008 and 2013. Arabic remains the most widely spoken language, excluding English, of young people aged 12 to 24 arriving in Australia in the last five years, with 16% or 3306 young people speaking Arabic. This is followed in order by Hazaragi (10.6%); Dari (8.3%); Nepali (6.6%); and Farsi (Persian) (3.75%). These figures reflect the high numbers of young people arriving from Iraq (where Arabic and Assyrian are spoken), Afghanistan (where Dari, Farsi and Hazaragi are spoken), and Iran (where Farsi (Persian) and Hazaragi are spoken - Hazargi being a language spoken by many Afghans living in Iran), as presented in section 1.2.

It is important to note that the high numbers of Arabic speakers will reflect it being a language also widely spoken by young people from Sudan. Further, while Myanmar is the third largest source country for young people arriving through the

Humanitarian Programme, Burmese/Myanmar is the tenth most spoken language. This is because young people from Myanmar may have nominated Karen or Burmese/Myanmar, both of which are languages of Myanmar. When combined, the total number would be 1043, a much higher figure and more consistent with the 'Country of Birth' figures in section 1.2.

Table 4: Top 10 languages spoken by humanitarian youth arrivals between 2008 and 2013 by age group

Main Language	Age on Arrival (2008-2013)			
	12-15	16-17	18-24	Total
Arabic	1051	549	1760	3360
Hazaragi	270	934	1012	2216
Dari	449	420	861	1730
Nepali	385	210	776	1371
Farsi (Persian)	143	120	514	777
Karen	113	79	542	734
Tamil	110	54	377	541
Assyrian	64	74	361	499
Persian	107	92	306	505
Burmese/Myanmar	97	52	353	502
Others	2493	1422	4568	8483
Total	5282	4006	11430	20718

3.3 The refugee experience and settlement

The pre-arrival experiences of humanitarian youth arrivals have diversified in recent years reflecting their mode of arrival. As the data in this Information Sheet indicates, a growing number of humanitarian youth arrivals throughout Australia, particularly those settling in Victoria and New South Wales, have arrived through the Offshore Programme. This is in contrast to the high numbers of young people arriving through the Onshore Programme between 20012-2013 (on visa sub-class 866). This reflects a high number of young people seeking asylum in Australia after arriving by boat.

Young people granted an 866 visa have commonly undergone a dangerous journey to Australia (via multiple transit countries and a highly risky boat journey) and will have spent time in Australian detention facilities, in community detention, on temporary visas, or at an offshore processing centre, while awaiting the outcome of their application for protection. The experience of seeking asylum is highly stressful and one of acute uncertainty, which often compounds the effects of pre-arrival trauma and can add to the complexity of the settlement process.

Regardless of their mode of arrival, young people who settle in Australia through the Humanitarian Programme are likely to have experienced long-term insecurity,

separation from family, exposure to violence and associated physical and mental health issues. They are also likely to have had limited access to services and opportunities, including education, employment, health and housing. These experiences have implications for settlement wherever they settle in Australia - young people experience settlement in ways distinct from adults due to their age, developmental stage and position within the family, and often face additional and more complex transitions than their Australian-born counterparts.

The particular issues facing young people from refugee backgrounds in the settlement context include: learning a new language, adjusting to a new culture and education system (often with disrupted or limited schooling prior to Australia); finding work and establishing themselves in the Australian workforce; negotiating family relationships in the context of (new concepts of) independence, freedom and child and youth rights; negotiating cultural identity and expectations from family and community; and establishing new peer relationships⁵.

At the same time, this group of young people come to Australia with a range of strengths, including broad international and cross-cultural knowledge, multilingual skills, adaptability and resourcefulness. However, their settlement needs are often overlooked as they are a sub-group of both the broader youth and settlement sectors. The MYAN believes that a targeted or specialist approach to policy and service delivery is essential to addressing the needs of young humanitarian entrants and supporting their social, cultural and economic participation in Australia.

⁵ For further information see <http://cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Settling%20In%202006.pdf> and <http://cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Settling%20or%20Surviving%202013.pdf>