Dropped from the moon

the settlement experiences of refugee communities in Tasmania

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Cover artwork by Clare Bradley

ISBN
PB: 978-1-921267-04-8
Web: 978-1-921267-05-5

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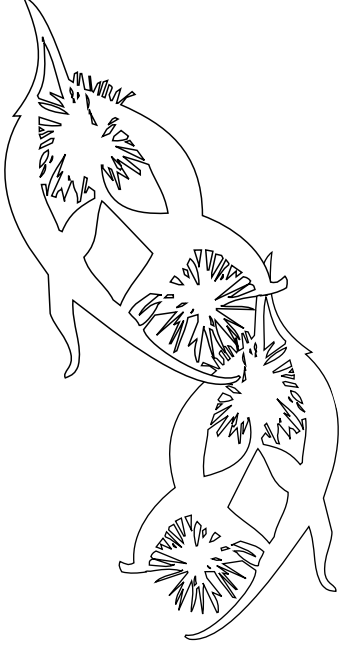


Acknowledgements

Our first thanks go to the research participants who generously gave up their time to tell us about their experiences. The stories we heard were stories of courage and survival, stories of letting go and of hanging on. They are the dreaming stories of the next generation of Australians and we hope that we have done them justice.

This research was funded by Anglicare Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government, with funds provided through the Family Assistance Program. The research was conducted by Kelly Madden, Jo Flanagan, James Boyce and Phil Hammond. The researchers would like to thank the members of the Project Reference Group, Phil Hammond (Anglicare), Teresa Hinton (Anglicare), Dickson Sebbit (Sudanese Community Association), John McCormick (Department of Premier and Cabinet), Georgina McLagen (Centacare), Assoc. Prof. Roberta Julian (University of Tasmania), Lyn Andersch and Janet Ong (Multicultural Tasmania), David Dedunczek (Department of Immigration and Citizenship), and Michelle Williams (Refugee and Humanitarian Arrivals Clinic), for their advice on the development of the research and their valuable input into the final report.

The researchers would also like to thank the bicultural workers and community service providers who helped with the research – they assisted both by helping us get in touch with members of refugee communities, and by explaining the joys and challenges of the work they do.

The research findings, conclusions and recommendations of this report are those of Anglicare and should not be attributed to any members of the reference group. Any errors in the report are the responsibility of the author.

Abbreviations

AMEP Adult Migrant English Program
DHHS Department of Health and Human Services
DIAC Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIMA Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (now DIAC)
DIMIA Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (now DIAC)
ESL English as a Second Language
ESL-NA English as a Second Language – New Arrival
HERS Humanitarian Entrants Reunion Scheme
IHSS Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy
IOM International Organisation for Migration
LLNP Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program
NAYSS Newly Arrived Youth Support Service
OAA On Arrival Accommodation
PASTT Program of Assistance for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma
RAHAC Refugee and Humanitarian Arrival Clinic
SGP Settlement Grants Program
SHP Special Humanitarian Program
TIS Telephone Interpreter Service
TPV Temporary Protection Visa
UNHCR United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Glossary of Terms

Asylum seeker
An individual who arrives in a country and asks for protection as a refugee.

Humanitarian Program
Australia's refugee intake, divided into two components: Humanitarian Entrants and Special Humanitarian Program entrants.

Humanitarian entrants
Refugees determined by the UNHCR to be refugees under the criteria of the 1951 Convention and who are then selected for Australia's humanitarian program and assisted to come to Australia. These were once just called refugees or 'Convention refugees'.

Integrated Humanitarian Services Strategy
The collection of services which are provided to refugees for the first six months after they arrive in Australia.

Immigration Program
This has two components: the Migration Program and the Humanitarian Program.

Migration Program
This has two components: the skill stream (migrants with skills or abilities needed by Australia), and the family stream (migrants who are selected on the basis of their family relationships with a sponsor in Australia).

Off-shore Program
Another term for the Humanitarian Program.

On Arrival Accommodation
The accommodation and support provided to newly arrived refugees.

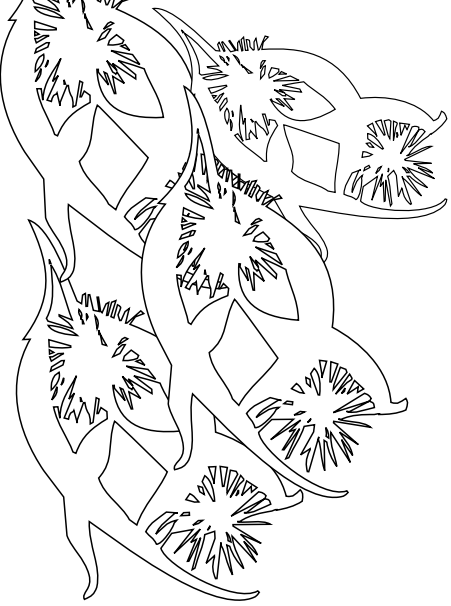
On shore arrivals
Asylum seekers who have arrived in Australia and had their asylum claims processed onshore.

Proposer
Australian citizen or resident, or a community group, which sponsors someone to come to Australia through the Special Humanitarian Program.

Refugee
Technically this is an asylum seeker who has been assessed against the criteria in the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, and who has been determined to be in need of protection. In this report this term is used to refer to both refugee and SHP entrants.

Settlement Services
The services provided to migrants and refugees to assist them to establish themselves in Australia and begin to move towards economic and social independence.

Special Humanitarian Program
Visa program for people who have been determined by the UNHCR to have suffered discrimination amounting to a gross violation of human rights and who have been 'proposed' (paid for) by an Australian citizen or resident, or a community group in Australia.



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I said to my husband, "Tasmania! Oh my God! It is at the end of the world! What will we do if we have to leave here? Where will we go? Antarctica?" And everything was so different. It was like we had been dropped from the moon.

(Woman, Southern Europe, Burnie)

We thought Hobart was a suburb in Sydney. We saw lots of bush and we thought, "Oh no! They are just going to throw us down there!" When we came here nobody speaks our language and we thought, "Oh no, it is the end of the world. " You better trust me, it was not easy. It was scary.

(Young woman,
Central Africa, Hobart)

1. Executive Summary

Tasmania has a proud tradition of welcoming refugees[1], shown by the high settlement rates in this state (per capita) and the high levels of volunteering to assist refugee settlement. However, for decades Tasmania has struggled to retain the refugee communities who have settled here. The Vietnamese, Hmong, Bosnian, and El Salvadoran communities have all largely left the state seeking employment and the opportunities available in larger communities, and it appears that the exodus of the Tasmanian African community has begun.

This report looks at the experiences of refugee communities in Tasmania against the Department of Immigration's criteria for successful settlement for new entrants, which has as a broad goal the full economic and social participation of new entrants. Many aspects of life in Tasmania suit refugee communities and promote good settlement outcomes. The refugees interviewed for this research reported high levels of satisfaction with many parts of their lives here – these were a mixture of community support, and state and commonwealth funded services. For example, the welcome they got from members of the broader community and the orientation and case management services provided by settlement services and their volunteers were all discussed as good things about life in Tasmania. State-funded health and education systems were viewed very positively. From the interviewees' perspective, which included that of both parents and youth who had graduated from Tasmanian schools, the education system in particular should be singled out for commendation, for continuing to provide a responsive and appropriate service to humanitarian entrants in spite of the challenges posed by increased numbers of ESL students and higher levels of need among that population. The refugees interviewed also largely felt that the Tasmanian health system was responding to their needs. They acknowledged shortcomings in the public health system but felt that within those constraints their access was equitable – and in view of other systems failures they were experiencing that was held to be an important consideration.

In 2000 Anglicare released a report called *A Place To Stay*, an examination of the settlement experiences of refugee communities in Tasmania. That report found major service gaps after the initial period of settlement and that the steady outflow of new entrants to the mainland was due to employment and community development needs (Boyce & Madden, 2000).

Seven years later the service system has changed dramatically as a consequence of both redesign and competitive tendering, with those services offered past an initial six months of support now focussed on those refugees deemed to be 'most in need'. The social environment has also changed. There have been an increased number of refugee arrivals and a shift to source countries in the Middle East and Africa. These refugees are more visibly different than some previous refugee groups. At the same time, at a political level, public discourse about refugees has been dominated by muddy definitional debates about 'legal' and 'illegal' refugees with an increased public resentment towards those deemed to be 'illegal'. And these shifts in immigration policy have coincided with a time of great social stress for low income Australians. At a community level it has been a time of rising costs of living, with low income Tasmanians in desperate competition for public housing and affordable private rental properties. While the Tasmanian economy has prospered, long-term unemployment rates have remained high with pathways out of unemployment limited for people with literacy and numeracy issues. Further, Job Network providers in this state appear to still be struggling to meet the needs of humanitarian entrants.

Refugees continue to point to settlement service gaps beyond the period of eligibility for intensive settlement services. These are keenly

[1]Technically a refugee is an asylum seeker who has been assessed against the criteria in the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, and who has been determined to be in need of protection. In this report this term is used to refer to both those people who come to Australian with the assistance of the UNHCR and those who come through the Special Humanitarian program.

2. Recommendations

felt as they struggle with their over-riding concerns about unemployment, their inability to get stable housing and their experiences of racial tension in the Tasmanian community. In particular, refugees are falling through gaps between settlement service and housing service providers, and their housing problems are undermining settlement outcomes for them by failing to provide security of tenure or housing that is accessible to the services they must use. In some cases this has resulted in them ending up in Government-funded crisis housing, financial stress, and struggling with the social isolation caused by frequent moves and the disconnection of community networks. It appears that the current system will only provide the security of public housing to refugees when they are reduced to homelessness rather than as part of Australia's humanitarian obligation to settlement.

Perhaps consciousness of Tasmania's history of warmly welcoming refugees has made Tasmanian authorities minimise the disturbing swell of racism in the community, particularly when part of a context of general anti-social behaviour by white youth. However, interviews with members of the refugee community make it clear that this behaviour exacerbates post-traumatic stress for its victims and can and does escalate to acts of violence directed at new entrants.

Anglicare proposes a range of recommendations to address the substantial problems outlined above. Some of these draw on existing initiatives, others on models found to be successful in other jurisdictions. All of them draw on the considerable pool of expertise and stories of success that exist among the refugee communities, settlement services and community service providers.

Recommendation 1
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensure that the Australian Cultural Orientation Program is reviewed to include accurate information about the housing, employment, and cost of living characteristics of low income Australians in each jurisdiction.

Recommendation 2
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship employ Australians who have settled in this country as refugees to deliver the pre-embarkation orientation in refugee camps.

Recommendation 3
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship fund an evaluation of the delivery of transit support services to ensure that these services are being delivered to the highest standard of client support.

Recommendation 4
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensures that the new contracts for Complex Case Support Network are tied to IHSS contracts and are delivered by IHSS providers.

Recommendation 5
That proposers of SHP entrants are assessed for their capacity to provide on-arrival accommodation by IHSS providers prior to the arrival of SHP entrants, and that access to on-arrival accommodation by IHSS providers is provided where necessary.

Recommendation 6
That funding to IHSS services is increased to enable them to provide the full range of orientation services to all SHP entrants.

Recommendation 7
That the Commonwealth Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations provide funding to Tasmanian AMEP providers to develop a pilot project to develop vocational opportunities with on-site English tuition.

Recommendation 8
That the Association of Independent Schools and the Catholic Education Office review the pathway planning support provided to senior secondary students from refugee communities with a view to providing best practice support in the transition into further education or training.

Recommendation 9
That the Tasmanian Minister for Health and Human Services provide 'one-off' funding to be used to purchase more cars for the driving training initiatives being run through settlement services.

Recommendation 10
That the Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources ensure that funds are directed through the Community Road Safety Partnerships program to run a programme recruiting and training volunteers to be driving instructors for the driver training initiatives.

Recommendation 11
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration ensure that there is appropriate consultation and planning conducted in partnership with the Tasmanian Government around the settlement of refugees in regional areas.

Recommendation 12
That the Commonwealth Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations provides funding to the Job Network in Tasmania to develop a specialised labour market programme for culturally and linguistically diverse communities to be delivered in Launceston and Hobart. This service will provide individual pathways planning, case management and referral, training, work experience and mentoring.

Recommendation 13
That the Tasmanian Minister for Education makes funds available to assist entry into courses at TAFE and UTAS for members of refugee communities to assist them to gain training and qualifications.

Recommendation 14
That the Tasmanian Attorney General direct funds to the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner to develop a public education campaign for employers around the following issues: the impact of cultural assumptions on recruitment practices and the value of a culturally diverse workforce.

Recommendation 15
That the Commonwealth Government through the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs increase Newstart and Austudy payments to the level of pension payments.

Recommendation 16
That the Commonwealth Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs ensure that humanitarian entrants and special humanitarian program entrants be identified by Centrelink as "especially vulnerable jobseekers" and that they consequently be given activity test exemption.

Recommendation 17
That the Commonwealth Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs fund the Commonwealth Financial Counselling Program (CFCP) in Tasmania to develop and provide financial literacy training and budget planning skills to refugee communities in partnership with settlement services.

Recommendation 18
That Tasmanian Government funds the development of a refugee food cooperative in Hobart and Launceston under the auspices of a Settlement Grants Program provider. Further, that these cooperatives are linked to a transport strategy to assist households to transport their groceries home.

Recommendation 19
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship direct funding to Housing Tasmania to construct or purchase properties for refugee individuals and families, to be managed by settlement services as community tenancies.

Recommendation 20
That the Tasmanian Minister for Health and Human services provides an additional $333,000 per annum to accommodation case planning and support services across the state to enable the employment of an additional 4 FTE housing support workers. Within this staffing increase Anglicare recommends that 1.5 FTE positions be dedicated to work with refugee communities: .5FTE in Launceston and 1FTE in Hobart.

Recommendation 21
That the Tasmanian Minister for Health and Human Services provides ongoing funding to the Private Rental Tenancy Support Service and that an additional $208,000 per annum is allocated to the PRTSS to enable the employment of an additional 2.5FTE tenancy support workers in Hobart and Launceston dedicated to work with refugee communities.

Recommendation 22
That the Tasmanian Attorney General order a review of the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 to incorporate a method of determining reasonable rent increases and to ensure that landlords perform maintenance promptly.

Recommendation 23
That the Tasmanian Attorney General, through the Office of Consumer Affairs, and the Tasmanian Minister for Heath and Human Services jointly fund a 12 month project which would aim to develop and deliver community education material for real estate agents on the issues faced by refugee communities. This project would be run through the Private Rental Tenancy Support Services.

Recommendation 24
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship make members of the Real Estate Institutes eligible for free use of the Telephone Interpreter Service.

Recommendation 25
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship direct funding to ensure that on-arrival accommodation is provided in Hobart and Launceston in a well serviced, purpose built or converted multi-family facility with a 24-hour support worker housed on site. This would enable both more cost-efficient orientation of new entrants by IHSS services and enable them to ensure a safe environment for new arrivals in the first month after arrival.

Recommendation 26
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship direct funds to support the cost of the Tasmanian Department of Health in the Refugee Health Clinics in Hobart and Launceston.

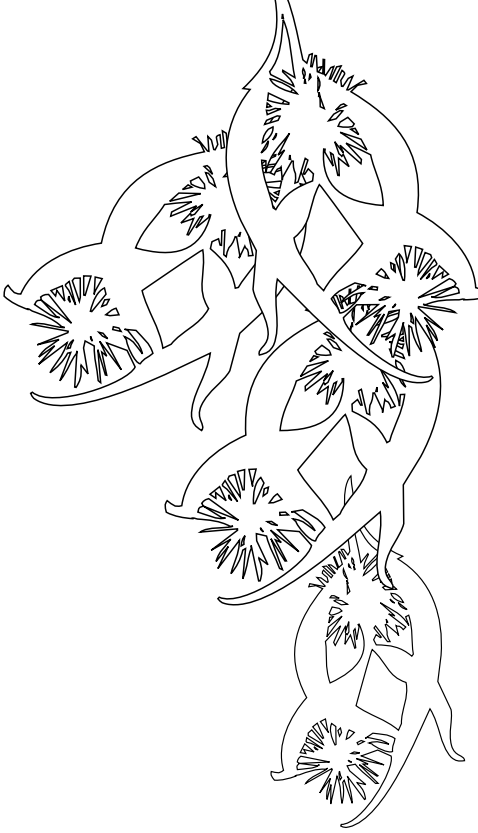
Recommendation 27
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensures that funds are provided to extend the migration advice service provided free of cost through the Settlement Grants Programme, to ensure that 1FTE Migration Agent is available to refugee communities in Hobart.

Recommendation 28
That DIAC develop a communication strategy which will allow proposers to make telephone enquiries about the progress of their applications and will ensure they are given feedback on the reasons for rejection.

Recommendation 29
Anglicare, in support of the Refugee Council of Australia, further recommends that DIAC conduct consultations with refugee communities to review their definition of family and ensure that a new, culturally appropriate version is reflected in DIAC policies and procedures.

Recommendation 30
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensure that there be a separate allocation of spaces in the humanitarian program for the purpose of family reunion for humanitarian entrants and that this does not impact on the overall humanitarian program quota.

Recommendation 31
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensures that funds are provided so that DIAC pay the travel costs



of reunions of immediate family and dependent members of extended families (including stepchildren, adopted children and orphaned children of siblings and elderly parents who have no remaining carers) and that a HECS-style debt recovery system is investigated with travel loans repaid on receipt of a pre-determined level of income.

Recommendation 32
That the Commissioner of Police be asked to place the issue of anti-social behaviour directed at culturally and linguistically diverse communities on the agenda of the Crime Prevention Community Safety Council.

Recommendation 33
That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensure that funds are allocated to develop community education programs focused on developing positive images about refugees. The programme should also explain the role of the offshore humanitarian program and the background of the refugees who come to Australia through it.

Recommendation 34
That the Tasmanian Minister for Education encourages educators to apply for Harmony Day Funding to promote initiatives focused on developing positive images about refugees. The programme should also explain the role of the offshore humanitarian program and the background of the refugees who come to Australia through it. Schools which do not have students from refugee backgrounds should particularly be encouraged to apply for funds to introduce their student populations to these issues.

3. Introduction

3.1 Aims of the research

This project's aims were to:

- Provide information on factors that have assisted and hindered settlement for refugees from their own perspective;
- Provide information on new entrants perception of how effectively mainstream and settlement services are meeting the needs of refugee-initiated communities;
- Identify the appropriateness of existing service design and identify service gaps; and
- Develop recommendations for policy directions for government and non-government services to better meet the needs of newly arrived refugees across a range of service areas.

3.2 Definitions

This project used as its definition of refugees those people from "refugee-initiated communities", that is, "those people who have fled situations of war, persecution and human rights violations". This is a concept developed by Julian et al (1997) to acknowledge the settlement issues faced by people from refugee communities who may have arrived in Australia on a range of visas and who are therefore technically not refugees, but whose experiences of trauma and/or persecution differ little from those who arrived on refugee visas. For example, a community which began with United Nations' High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) sponsored refugees may in time sponsor family members to Australia through both the humanitarian and the migration program. Family stream entrants may come from refugee camps, yet technically would be migrants. The concept of communities initiated by refugees emphasises the social process of settlement rather than political or administrative categories.

Anglicare's research included

- People from refugee-initiated communities who have arrived in Australia in the past 10 years;
- People from refugee-initiated communities who have been directed to Tasmania by DIAC[2] or who have come here because their sponsors are here; and
- People from refugee-initiated communities who have relocated here after first settling on the mainland.

3.3 Research methods

The first phase of the project involved a series of interviews with service providers and policy makers around the state. These interviews were conducted between March and June 2006. They included representatives of the organisations providing intensive settlement support services: Centacare and the Migrant Resource Centre (North), the Adult Migrant English Service, the Migrant Resource Centre (South), the English as a Second Language coordinators (Education Department), the DHHS Multicultural Health Policy Officer, the medical staff from the Refugee and Humanitarian Arrival Clinic, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services, the Tasmania Police, women's health services, financial and family counselling services, youth services, child care services, Job Network providers, and researchers at the University of Tasmania working on refugee-community specific research.

[2]In the past two years the Department of Immigration has been called the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA), the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) and most recently, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). In the interests of consistency the text of this report will refer to the Department as DIAC although citations might refer to earlier nomenclature.

Nineteen focus group discussions were held in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie with people from refugee initiated communities. Participants were

- Aged 18 years or over;
- Members of refugee initiated communities; and
- Had arrived in Australia in the last 10 years.

In-depth interviews with three people from refugee-initiated communities who met the criteria were also conducted using a semi-structured interview format.

Participants were contacted through service providers, volunteer support groups and through an advertisement in two Tasmanian daily newspapers.

The discussions and interviews took between one and three hours. Discussions were recorded, transcribed and analysed. Interpreting services assisted with focus groups and interviews if there were language issues. Consent forms and project information were explained to the participants in a language they understood. All interviewees signed a consent form for the release of information. They were all remunerated for their participation.

Names and identifying details have been changed to protect participants' privacy.

3.4 Profile of the research participants

In all, 78 people took part in the focus groups and interviews. The research included people from eight communities which have arrived in Tasmania over the last 10 years: their countries of origin were Sudan, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Rwanda, Iran, Afghanistan and the Former Yugoslavia. The research participants' countries of origin were self-defined and reflected their country of language, culture and ethnicity rather than that of birth (for example, some of the younger Ethiopian participants were been born in refugee camps in Sudan). The country of origin of the research participants is largely reflective of the main country of origin of refugee arrivals in the period 1996-2006. In order to protect the confidentiality of people from very small communities broader regional descriptions are used in this report.

1. Research participants: country of origin

	Men	Women
Sudan (Northern Africa)	15	13
Ethiopia (Horn of Africa)	4	4
Sierra Leone (West Africa)	8	8
Burundi (Central Africa)	5	3
Rwanda (Central Africa)	-	1
Former Yugoslavia (Southern Europe)	3	3
Afghanistan (South-central Asia)	2	6
Iran (South-central Asia)	1	2
Total	**38**	**40**

2. Research Participants: age and gender

The majority of participants were under 35 years of age. The relative youth of the research participants reflects the youth of the refugee intake in the period 2001-2005. In that period most Humanitarian Program entrants (67%) were under 25 years of age (DIMA, 2006c)

Age	Men	Women
18 - 25	11	12
26 - 35	12	16
36 - 45	10	6
46 - 55	3	5
56 - 65	2	1
Total	**38**	**40**

3. Length of time in Australia

	Men	Women
< 6 months	3	3
7 - 12 months	6	7
13 – 24 months	8	10
2 – 4 years	12	12
4 – 6 years	3	4
6 – 8 years	1	2
8 – 10 years	-	1
No answer	5	1
Total	**38**	**40**

4. Income source

	Men	Women	Total
Newstart	22	4	26
Youth Allowance	6	6	12
Parenting Payment (Partnered)	0	12	12
Parenting Payment (Single)	0	11	11
Austudy	4	2	6
Wages	6	2	8
No answer	-	3	3
Total	**38**	**40**	**78**

3.5 Limitations of the research

There continues to be a considerable migration of refugee-initiated communities from Tasmania to the mainland. This made it difficult to recruit communities who had been here for five years or more, as some of these communities are now very small. The experiences of people from El Salvador, for example, are not reflected in this research.

Similarly, people who had arrived in Australia as asylum seekers and after assessment have been granted temporary protection or bridging visas were potentially included in the research. However, while the experiences of these people currently dominate Australian research literature, no people in this category participated in Anglicare's research process, a reflection of the relatively low numbers of people on these visas in Tasmania.

Other limitations were a consequence of linguistic and cultural issues and a reflection of the growing diversity of the Humanitarian Program intake. Participants from the same country of origin came from diverse language groups. While efforts were made to ensure that appropriate interpreting services were provided, a number of interviewees were participating in focus groups in a second language creating a further barrier to communication for them. Effort was made to have gender-appropriate interpreters at the focus groups. However, due to the lack of availability of interpreters some groups of women were provided with male interpreters. This may have presented a barrier to communication around certain issues.

3.6 The structure of this report: indicators of settlement

This report begins with a discussion of the policy framework for the settlement of humanitarian entrants in Tasmania and a review of the service system for these new arrivals. It then looks at the literature on key areas of the refugee experience in Australia which are relevant to the findings of the research. Sections 5, 6 and 7 are a discussion of the findings. The final section includes recommendations for policy directions for government and non-government services to better meet the needs of newly arrived refugees across a range of service areas.

In collating the findings, this report took as its structure the discussion of settlement indicators in the *Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants (May 2003)*. Settlement is defined by DIAC as the period of adjustment experienced by new arrivals until they can fully participate in the Australian community. Successful settlement is therefore broadly defined as the ability of new arrivals to establish a new life and participate in Australian society (DIMIA, 2003b). The capacity of new arrivals to do this varies according to their pre-arrival backgrounds and personal histories, and also their experiences on arrival. Other studies have supported this multi-dimensional approach to looking at settlement (see for example Khoo & McDonald, 2001).

In its review, DIAC used a number of quantifiable indicators to measure how well new arrivals are faring in the settlement process. These were broadly grouped under indicators of social participation, economic participation, and physical wellbeing. Measures of social participation and wellbeing included English proficiency, satisfaction with life in Australia and intentions towards Australian citizenship. Measures of economic participation included labour force participation, employment details, and occupational status, including regaining the level of occupational status experienced prior to settlement and using their highest qualifications. Indicators of economic wellbeing include level of income, whether income is received in the form of wages or government pensions and benefits, and housing details (including tenure type, accessibility and affordability). Measures of physical well being included physical and mental health status.

Settlement success is indicated by positive outcomes measured against these indicators. Previous studies have used data from DIAC's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants in Australia (LSIA1) as well as ABS data such as Census data, mental health and labour force data. In

4. Background

this research qualitative data was collected against all the settlement indicators to gain an understanding of new entrants' perception of their settlement experiences. The findings of this report are grouped against the settlement criteria.

Many reports on refugee settlement experiences separate findings out into separate community responses to capture the diversity of the settlement experience. This report does not separate findings on the basis of country of origin. Focus groups were organised on community and gender lines but the overwhelming commonality of the themes emerging prompted the author to collate the findings.

4.1 Refugee arrivals in Australia

Australia's contribution to the resettlement and protection of refugees is significant among developed countries. The Australian Government accepts approximately 13,000 refugees each year through the off-shore Humanitarian Program. The vast majority of these visas are issued off-shore in roughly equal numbers to Humanitarian and Special Humanitarian Visa categories[3]. A small number of protection visas are granted onshore as temporary visas[4]. While 13,000 is a substantial number of people, in recent years the program has been overshadowed by the general migration program, of which it represents only 10%. This is a fall from 17% in 2000/01. The rest of Australia's migration intake is focussed on family, skilled migration and business migration, and refugee advocates argue that Australia could and should expand its humanitarian program (RCOA, 2006:17).

Refugees arriving in Australia make up one particularly disadvantaged group in the community. Their life experiences mean that they have endured extreme financial, psychological and physical hardship which has significant on-going consequences during their early settlement phase and major implications for the services they use. Research indicates that effective intervention and support in the early settlement phase enhances the opportunities for long term integration and participation in the community (DIMIA, 2003a).

In recent years a higher proportion of refugees coming to Australia are from Middle Eastern countries and Africa. The top source countries in 2004-05 were Sudan, Iraq, and Afghanistan, followed by other African countries – Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burundi. DIAC notes that all of these groups have higher levels of poverty, larger families and lower levels of English proficiency and education than previous arrivals (DIMIA, 2003b: 168). This creates more complex barriers to their settlement process and increases the demand for a range of mainstream services.

[3]In 2004-05 these were 5511 and 6585 respectively (DIMIA, 2004a).

[4]1082 in 2004-05 (ibid).

4.2 Refugee arrivals in Tasmania

Current Australian Government policies for both skilled migrants and refugees encourage settlement in regional areas. The substantial increase in Humanitarian entrants and their families to Tasmania over the past five years has had a significant impact on the demand for both settlement services and a range of mainstream services in the Tasmanian community.

Over the period 2001- 05 Tasmania settled around 2000 people from the Humanitarian Program and people identified within the Migration program as having low English proficiency (often these are from refugee source countries). This represents 1.2% of the national intake for that period (DIMIA, 2006c). Tasmania differs from other states in that a larger proportion of settlers arriving in this state through the national migration program are refugees. Twenty eight per cent of all overseas settlers coming to Tasmania in 2006 were humanitarian entrants, with a further 1% of the total family steam migrants from refugee source countries (DIAC, 2007b).

Some groups within the national migration program have been identified as having particular barriers to settlement in Australia. They are humanitarian entrants, family stream migrants with low levels of English proficiency and dependents of skilled migrants with low English proficiency who have settled in regional areas. Of the people in these categories who come to Tasmania the majority are humanitarian entrants (66% in the period 2001 – 2005). This compares with a national average of approximately 32% (DIMA, 2006b:6). What implication this has for service delivery in Tasmania is unclear, as while the settlement needs for skill stream migrants are generally lower – they generally have better English skills, qualifications and employment outcomes – family stream migrants coming from refugee source countries have similar histories of pre-departure trauma and face similar issues with settlement but would be ineligible for any service support or Centrelink benefits. This means support for these migrants may be falling on already impoverished households.

Overall, the number of Humanitarian Entrants to Tasmania has more than trebled over the past five years. The source countries have also changed, corresponding with the trend of the national refugee intake. In the period 2001- 05, Humanitarian entrants to Tasmania reflected the predominant source countries of Australia generally, with 680 (56%) entrants from Sudan; 191 (16%) from Sierra Leone; 118 (10%) from Ethiopia; 61 (5%) from Former Yugoslavia, 45 from Afghanistan, 30 from Eritrea, 30 from Uganda, 25 from Egypt and 43 from Kenya (this data however, reflects country of birth rather than nationality). Other small new communities in Tasmania are Burundian, Liberian, Congolese and Rwandan (DIMA, 2006c:7). Since the completion of the data collection for this project refugees from Burma have begun to be settled in Tasmania.

4.3 Policies impacting on settlement experiences

4.3.1 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol

Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This was adopted in 1951 and defines as a refugee a person:

(who) owing to (a) well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UN, 1951).

Initially this was defined as arising from events associated with the Second World War, but in 1967 a protocol was passed to extend coverage to refugees around the world. The obligations on countries that are signatories to the convention come into effect after an asylum seeker has entered that country. The central obligation is that of 'non-refoulement', that is, not sending someone back into a situation of possible persecution. Another important obligation is not to penalise asylum seekers for entering a country 'illegally'.

However, under recent Australian Governments the Convention has been increasingly criticised as outdated. It is argued that the definition of refugee is derived from a Cold War context and assumes individual experience of persecution by a regime, and does not reflect the real causes of current refugee flows which are civil wars, ethnic and communal conflicts and situations of violence, natural disasters and famine (see for example Millbank, 2000; Head, 2001). The Australian Government has been increasingly critical of the Refugee Convention, feeling particularly constrained by the obligations imposed on it with regard to its commitments to on-shore arrivals. There has been considerable, and highly contentious, public debate about how these asylum seekers, improperly dubbed 'illegal arrivals', fit in with our humanitarian migration program. The current Government has adopted controversial deterrent methods for these asylum seekers: mandatory non-reviewable indefinite detention, deportation, temporary visas with no family reunion rights, minimal social security assistance, no access to job network or language programs – for some, even no access to public health services. This has caused considerable stress within settlement services systems as these strategies are contrary to the ethos and principles of these services and have undermined good practice as service providers become confused about refugee's entitlement to services.

Yet even with these measures a high proportion of asylum seekers are granted protection. The Government's decision to include these numbers of on-shore arrivals within its annual intake of refugees is also criticised by refugee advocates who argue that Australia should not respond to its international humanitarian obligation to provide sanctuary to asylum seekers within the framework of a migration quota.

Importantly for this research, recent policy work for the Australian Government has argued that the Convention-based system itself fosters hostility to asylum seekers and contributes to simplistic stereotypes of political asylum seekers as genuine and deserving and economic asylum seekers as abusive and undeserving and that a review of the Convention is required (Millbank, 2000). Analysts of Government policies argue that making the deterrence of asylum seekers a subject for domestic politics has contributed to a current of racism and the institutionalisation of social exclusion (RCOA, 2006; Taylor, 2004).

4.3.2 The Migration Act 1958

The Migration Act is the legislation which provides the framework for non-citizens to enter or remain in Australia. It is also the Act which allows for the removal of non-citizens. Part of the implementation of the Migration Act is the refugee determination system developed in the 1990s. This includes the decision making by the Immigration Department officials, access to review by the independent Refugee Review Tribunal and appeal on matters of law to the Federal Court. Amendments to the Act in recent years to allow for offshore processing of asylum seekers have been hugely controversial.

4.3.3 Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity (May 2003)

This document is the Australian Government's key statement on multiculturalism. It updated the *New Agenda for Multicultural Australia* (1999) and was written with "international and domestic events of the last three years" firmly in view. The policy calls for all Australians to demonstrate an "overriding loyalty to Australia and its people" and respect for the democratic institutions and the principles that underpin it. These are defined as the Constitution, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language, the rule of law, acceptance and equality. The policy emphasises the concept of reciprocal obligation as central to Australian Citizenship. The policy describes an Australia in which people "see themselves as directly threatened by terrorism". In this context, community harmony and social cohesion become central goals.

4.3.4 The Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants (May 2003)

The 2003 review of DIAC funded settlement services, mainstream services and social

support for new entrants recommended the development of a new settlement planning framework focussed on achieving early settlement outcomes (see 4.3.5).

The Report also recommended that the program which provided ongoing funding to some of the main settlement service providers to refugee communities - the Migrant Resource Centres, Migrant Service Agencies and the Community Settlement Services Scheme - be replaced by the Settlement Grants Program – a program of short-term grants targeted at groups perceived to be particularly high need. This new funding program focuses on 'building self-reliance', developing English skills and building connections with mainstream services. Of concern with this new model are the issues of those refugees potentially excluded from services – refugees with special needs, on visas excluding them from eligibility, or who are not new arrivals - and the resources available to mainstream agencies.

Among other recommendations, this report also recommended directing humanitarian entrants to regional locations, although it did state that these must offer appropriate employment opportunities and access to both specialist and mainstream services.

4.3.5 National Framework for Settlement Planning

This was launched in March 2006, building on the report of the review of settlement services (above). Its aim is to provide a strategic and coordinated approach to settlement planning. This is to be done through a regular planning cycle which will identify service delivery and settlement needs and ensure these are promptly communicated. The Framework also aims to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different settlement stakeholders. In doing this, it sets out the levels of service support available for new arrivals and stresses that settlement services are specific, limited in role and short term. It emphasises the importance of ensuring mainstream services are responsive to the needs of new entrants and the importance of focussing settlement services on those most in need of assistance.

The issues for the settlement service system with the framework are that it assumes mainstream services are resourced properly to deal with refugee clients – work which requires resources such as interpreters, bilingual staff, bicultural workers, translated service material and appropriate training. The framework also focuses settlement services towards those refugees assessed to be most in need but maintains limitations based not on need but visa class and length of residency in Australia.

4.4 Settlement services

4.4.1 Commonwealth services

Since the 1990s the focus of Australia's settlement services has shifted. While some areas have had funding increases, some people have been denied access to services because of their visa category. User pays has been introduced in some areas and some areas of service delivery have been reduced. Under the Howard Government, DIAC has moved away from providing direct services to managing the delivery of services purchased from a variety of departments and non-Government organisations. The focus of these services has increasingly been on new arrivals (Taylor, 2004). The Refugee Council of Australia has expressed concern about competitive tendering arrangements in the settlement services sector and argued that the tendering process:

- results in uncertainty and a degree of suspicion in the settlement services sector;
- erodes previous collaborative relationships between agencies and organisations;
- leads to a loss in the skill base of settlement workers; and
- potentially has a significant impact on the effective delivery of settlement services to newly arrived and highly vulnerable individuals (RCOA, 2006).

At the same time as the move towards competitive tendering, there has been an increased emphasis on rationalising services with service delivery increasingly focussed on the newest arrivals and the entrants who are

deemed to be most in need. Independent evaluation of the contractual requirements on providers is made impossible by the necessity of keeping commercial arrangements in confidence, but settlement service providers report that they are struggling to deal with clients with complex and high needs and that they are facing the loss of skilled settlement workers due to budgetary restraints, loss of contracts and excessive and unsustainable work loads. Cost-recovery imperatives have also been introduced which have limited access to some services. Complex visa categories reinforce the exclusion of certain categories of refugees from eligibility for support. A further problem for service delivery in the current context is the level of the reporting requirements associated with the contracts which place a large administrative burden on services.

The findings of DIAC's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants in Australia show that humanitarian entrants are generally found to take longer than migrants to achieve parity with the general Australian population against settlement indicators and also that their outcomes worsened over the 1990s against both economic and health and wellbeing indicators. Taylor refutes the view expressed in the DIMIA review (2003) that this reflects differences in countries of origin, suggesting that an alternative explanation of the data could be the decreased availability of post-arrival services (Taylor, 2004).

The Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS)

The Australian Government provides key settlement services to people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian Program through the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS). The following services are generally provided for around six months. However, service providers report that in many instances this has been extended to 8 or 9 months for people with complex needs and that a longer period of robust case management is required before many people have the skills and resources required to navigate Australian service systems.

Service	Providers in Tasmania in 2007
On Arrival Reception and Assistance Includes meeting people on arrival, taking them to suitable accommodation, providing initial orientation and meeting any emergency needs for medical attention or clothing and footwear.	• Migrant Resource Centre (North) • Centacare (South)
Case Coordination, Information and Referrals Includes a case coordination plan based on an initial needs assessment, information about and referral to other service providers and mainstream agencies and help for proposers to fulfill their role of assisting SHP entrants	• Migrant Resource Centre (North) • Centacare (South)
Accommodation Services Helps refugees to find appropriate and affordable accommodation and provides them with basic household goods to start establishing their own household in Australia	• Migrant Resource Centre (North) • Centacare (South)
Short Term Torture and Trauma Counselling Services Provide an assessment of needs, a case plan, referral for long-term torture and trauma counselling and raise awareness among other health care providers of health issues arising from torture and trauma experiences.	• Migrant Resource Centre (North) • Centacare (South)
Volunteer coordination IHSS services coordinate the volunteer support available to refugees. This is seeks to focus the support of community volunteers on providing friendship and social support to refugees by helping people to urban environments, shops, transport systems, education and health systems, linking them to relevant community groups, as well as assisting people to find housing and learn tenancy skills.	• Migrant Resource Centre (North) • Centacare (South)

Further support for humanitarian entrants is provided by DIAC through the following programs.

Settlement Grants Program (SGP)

The SGP is for people in the first five years of their settlement. The target client group is humanitarian entrants, family stream migrants and the dependents of skilled migrants in rural and regional areas who have low levels of English proficiency. Its goals emphasize the building of self-reliance in new arrivals. Grants are issued to provide short-term casework with an emphasis on referral to mainstream services, or to fund community development work with refugee-initiated communities which are still receiving significant numbers of new arrivals. It can also be used to fund service planning, development and integration, which includes encouraging the delivery of culturally and linguistically appropriate services by mainstream and other settlement service providers.

It appears that the funding allocated is insufficient in comparison to the level of need for support being experienced by refugees who have been here longer than six months. SGP grant holders are required contractually to provide ongoing case management to a small percentage of clients, do community development work, and ensure access to migration advice, which can mean purchasing such advice from migration agents. In reality, SGP providers report that the bulk of the clients coming through IHSS require a longer period of case management with some of the most complex issues emerging only after the exit from IHSS. For example, SGP providers are accepting referrals on the basis of domestic violence and child protection issues. A review of the grants available to SGP providers in Tasmania suggests that staffing levels would be inadequate to this level of service delivery. Further, mainstream service providers report that many humanitarian entrants approaching community services would be classified by other Australian Government funding streams as high needs clients with a need for intensive case management which their resources cannot provide.

To illustrate, in Tasmania there were 1086 entrants in the period 2002-05 who were humanitarian program entrants or migration program entrants who were eligible to use the SGP funded programs (due to low levels of English proficiency). Of these, 76% were reporting no or poor English, 67% of them were youth (DIMA, 2006c), and the research suggests a very high proportion of them would have post-traumatic stress disorder (see FASSTT, 2005).

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

English language tuition is provided for adult humanitarian entrants from non-English speaking backgrounds who are assessed as not having the basic English skills needed to settle satisfactorily in Australia. This program entitles new arrivals to 510 hours of English language tuition which can be delivered through a variety of teaching methods. There is also a Special Preparatory Program which offers extra hours of tuition in a supportive environment to humanitarian entrants who have special needs because of their pre-arrival experiences.

Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS)

This is a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week telephone interpreting service in 120 languages and dialects with qualified interpreters. This service is free for emergency services, parts of the Department of Immigration and medical practitioners in general practice, trade unions, MPs and NGOs providing settlement services. For other services it operates on a fee for service basis.

Living in Harmony Grant Program

The Living in Harmony Grant Program can be directed to assist refugee and humanitarian entrants although it has a broader remit to promote Australian values and mutual obligation, engage the whole community and address understanding and intolerance at the community level. It is for not-for-profit organisations.

Other Australian Government Departments contribute to the settlement of refugees through the following programs.

Newly Arrived Youth Support Service (NAYSS)

NAYSS is an initiative funded the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) to provide culturally appropriate services ranging from early intervention to transition for newly arrived young people aged 12 to 21 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It aims to improve their level of engagement with family, work, education, training and the community. There is one NAYSS service in Tasmania, run by Colony 47 in Southern Tasmania. Colony 47 runs NAYSS as a combined Reconnect and JPET service (services for at risk youth which focus on reconnecting them with communities and work and training).

Program of Assistance for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma (PASTT)

The Department of Health And Ageing funds PASTT to promote the health and wellbeing of people who have experienced torture and trauma prior to their arrival in Australia. Services provided by torture and trauma services include counselling, referral, advocacy, education and training and natural therapies. In Tasmania this service is provided on a state-wide basis by the Phoenix Centre.

Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP)

The Department of Education, Science and Training provides language, literacy and numeracy training for eligible clients. Humanitarian entrants who are recipients of Centrelink benefits and who fulfill certain criteria have access to this extended literacy and numeracy tuition after they have finished with the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). This program is delivered by a contracted service provider, which might be a community organisation, a private provider, or a TAFE. In Tasmania it was provided by TAFE Tasmania but after recent recontracting has been delivered state-wide by Mission Australia.

4.4.2 State Government services

The Refugee and Humanitarian Arrival Clinic (RAHAC)

The Refugee and Humanitarian Arrival Clinic is a specialist clinic within the Royal Hobart Hospital. The clinic can conduct initial assessment of newly arrived refugees referred and also accepts referrals from General Practitioners. It offers a comprehensive health assessment service with a particular focus on infectious illnesses. There is currently no equivalent clinic in northern Tasmania.

The Multicultural Health Project (DHHS)

This State Government-funded initiative sits within the Population and Health Priorities Unit. Its role is to develop policies which will promote health and wellbeing outcomes for people from multicultural backgrounds. This is done by working with the community and Government departments to identify health needs and improve service responsiveness. The Multicultural Health Policy Officer also provides information, education and advocacy.

Humanitarian Entrants Reunion Scheme (HERS)

HERS is a loan scheme administered by the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) Network of Tasmania on behalf of the State government. The scheme enables humanitarian entrants to obtain loans of up to $2000 to assist with the cost of airfares for people they have sponsored to come to Tasmania. Proposers who are eligible for a Commonwealth Health Care Card can also get access to interest-free loans for travel costs through the International Organisation for Migration Refugee Travel Loan Fund.

Work Placement Program

A joint project of Multicultural Tasmania and the Public Sector Management Office, the Work Placement Program provides a two-week work placement opportunity to humanitarian entrants and other migrants who are having difficulty finding work. The placements were initially in State Government agencies but have now extended to Government Business Enterprises

and local Government. Participants have largely been students from the University of Tasmania or TAFE Tasmania. Some participants have been offered casual, part-time and full-time work since participating in this program.

4.4.3 Local Government initiatives

The key local governments currently relevant to the settlement of refugee communities are those of the greater Hobart area, Launceston and Cradle Coast. All of these Councils have developed initiatives to support cultural diversity at community level. Glenorchy City Council, for example, has a Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee which led the Council to develop the Harmony Day Grant funded *Diversity: We Are Who We Are* project. This aimed to address issues of racism and discrimination in the City of Glenorchy through social and sporting events between local youth, young people from new communities and Police, an experiential learning program in Glenorchy schools and a photographic exhibition displayed on public transport.

4.5 Refugee visa categories and eligibility for settlement services

Much of Australia's refugee population apply for their visas off-shore through the UNHCR. They are determined to meet the criteria for refugee status as set out in the UN Convention and to have a strong need for resettlement. From this pool of refugees Australia then selects those people which it believes meets its settlement goals. This selection process prioritises the young, the healthy, the well educated and those with family support systems in place in Australia. These refugees are eligible to use the full range of settlement services.

Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) entrants are people who have been determined by the UNHCR to have suffered discrimination amounting to a gross violation of human rights. They have been given a humanitarian visa but their passage to a country of settlement is not guaranteed. They must be 'proposed' by an Australian citizen or resident of a community group in Australia. It is the proposer who pays, or acts as guarantor for the loans to pay for the airfares of people travelling to Australia under the SHP. Proposers also have a responsibility to assist with the settlement of the new entrant when they arrive, including accommodation and orientation.

Proposers get a range of support from IHSS services to help them meet their obligations and people on SHPs can use most of the IHSS services. However, these services are not automatically offered to them. They are triggered by a request from the proposer who may lack an understanding of the service system or be fearful of undermining any future applications for proposal. The situation of SHPs also differs in that they carry substantial debts (for their travel costs) and are more dependent on fellow community members for orientation and support.

Residents of Australia can also try to bring family to Australia by applying for the family reunion visas provided through the Migration Program but these entrants will not be eligible for settlement support services. In addition, under the conditions of some of the visas granted to on-shore arrivals who are seeking asylum, people may be ineligible for income support from Centrelink or to use Medicare and have limited access to settlement services. Nationally, concerns about the situation of these asylum seekers and the effects of mandatory indefinite detention on children and vulnerable adults have dominated research and advocacy efforts. These desperate concerns have diverted attention and resources away from the settlement concerns of those selected offshore.

4.6 Settlement needs of new entrants

Refugees face great challenges in dealing with settlement in Australia. All have experienced a level of trauma associated with displacement. Many also suffer from the effects of torture, trauma and unstable living conditions for prolonged periods. Arrival in Australia may entail separation from immediate family members who remain in refugee camps, creating further anxiety and stress for new arrivals.

Refugees have specific needs in a range of areas. Those identified among refugee communities in Tasmania are housing, community development, employment, legal issues (including information regarding the judicial system, policing and road rules), social participation and assistance to propose family members (DIMIA, 2005). DIAC has identified the following groups among refugees in Tasmania as having significant needs: sole female parents; 'head of family' males; large families; youth and young adults to age 25; and those with limited or no formal education or literacy. Certain groups of youth were singled out for priority: newly arrived migrant youth in northern Tasmania belonging to small and emerging communities; and refugee and family stream migrant youth in southern Tasmania (DIMIA, 2005). Small and emerging communities are defined as those that have an Australia-wide population of less than 15,000 people of whom 30% or more have arrived in the last 5 years. Evidence suggests that as the communities are mainly newly arrived they are not able to provide a high level of support to new entrants. Nationally the small and emerging communities getting priority for funding from DIAC in 2006-07 are the Burundian, Liberian, Sierra Leonese, Congolese, Rwandan and Ethiopian communities (DIMA, 2006c).

4.7 Refugees and poverty

Insufficient income and a lack of resources are characteristics of the majority of refugees in Australia. This is due in part to the cost of resettlement, the disruption to education and work, the difficulties in finding employment, their lack of assets and networks. It is also due to the dependence of many refugees on Centrelink benefits as their main source of income. The low levels of these incomes relative to cost of living and the hardship associated with them is well documented.

Each form of income is associated with particular problems and poverty traps. Parenting Payment Single, for example, while relatively better in terms of income levels and regularly adjusted because as a pension it is linked to Average Male Weekly Earnings, does not meet the minimum costs of raising children and is strongly associated with child poverty (ACOSS, 2004). ACOSS estimates that the largest gaps between family and youth payments and minimum cost of raising children are for those families with teenagers. The result of these shortfalls is evident in Tasmania, where research has found that sole parents reported financial difficulties across a range of indicators (Madden & Law, 2005). At its most extreme, the problems experienced by this group had forced them to seek assistance from emergency relief services where they are over-represented in the figures of people in financial crisis (Madden, 2003).

Many of Anglicare's research participants were dependent on Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance. These allowances are set at a lower level than pensions. While a debate has raged about poverty line comparisons, the Henderson Poverty Line has for decades been considered a useful indicator of the money required for a household to maintain an 'austere' standard of living. The most recent comparisons of Centrelink incomes with this measure suggest that a single adult on Newstart Allowance receiving the maximum benefits possible would receive only 62% and a single youth (aged 18 – 21) only 50% of the income required to meet the Henderson Poverty Line. Recipients of these allowances are also subject to high marginal tax rates on any income from earnings and to the suspension or loss of payments for non-compliance with Activity and Administrative tests. These fines, which escalate to include all of their income for a 2 month period, can be for failure to meet obligations due to unstable housing, movement to country areas which may be seen as low employment areas, and the need to inform Centrelink of any paid employment. Furthermore, Newstart and Youth Allowees are also subject to the vagaries of State Government concession systems, and are ineligible in Tasmania for key travel and transport concessions. Austudy is the payment for people aged 25 years or more who are engaged in full-time study or are undertaking a full-time apprenticeship. Recipients of this payment receive incomes which are only 50% of the income required to meet the Henderson Poverty Line (BSL Poverty Line update, 2005).

A further aspect of the poverty experienced by refugees are costs peculiar to their situation. Refugees often face large costs involved in sponsoring family members, including the thousands of dollars for airfares and the cost of providing them with support on arrival. They also face the cost of sending remittances to family members, repaying debts to relatives on arrival and setting up households. They do this within the context of a refugee community which has few resources to offer support (discussed in Taylor, 2004).

4.8 Housing and refugee communities

In 1997 research into the settlement issues faced by refugees in Tasmania identified housing as a key issue for refugee communities. At that time the research participants expressed relatively high rates of satisfaction with current accommodation (Julian et al, 1997). The situation changed dramatically in the next decade.

In the last five years Tasmania has experienced an escalating crisis in affordable housing, with diminishing access to public housing stock and increased competition for private rental accommodation (Anglicare, 2006). Within this housing market disadvantaged groups find themselves discriminated against as potential tenants (Cameron, 2002). Refugees face particular problems in seeking housing including restricted eligibility for some to on-arrival support, cultural and language barriers, inadequate resources (low or no income), large families, a lack of information and vulnerability to discrimination by landlords (Kelly, 2004; Beer and Foley, 2003).

Recent national research has identified refugees as a group which is vulnerable to being in housing crisis (Kelly, 2004) and to homelessness (Kelly, 2004; Beer and Foley, 2003: Victorian Homelessness Strategy, 2002:9). A recent study of the housing pathways of refugees estimated that 30% of refugees and asylum seekers (Temporary Protection Visa holders) had been homeless, a figure which represented the sum of those people who had been forced to live with friends and relatives and those who had made use of temporary accommodation. It also found that refugees themselves interpreted homelessness narrowly, that is, to be without a physical roof over their heads (Beer and Foley, 2003)[5]. The pattern of unstable housing experienced by refugees ranges from profound difficulties in their early settlement through to greater stability after some years of settlement. During the transition phase however, this group has significant need of accommodation support services (Beer and Foley, 2003).

Refugees have particular needs within the housing market. Housing that provides a basic sense of safety is a primary need for refugees with a background of torture and trauma (Kelly, 2004). Research has repeatedly revealed that refugees themselves aspire to living in public housing, valuing it highly for both its perceived affordability and the security of tenure that it offers (MRRHAP, 2007; Kelly 2004, Beer and Foley, 2003). However, the Australian private rental market is structured around short term leases so that landlords, who are usually small scale investors, can have swift access to their capital. The private rental market is limited in its capacity to provide people with an ongoing sense of stability.

In addition, a significant number of the Humanitarian Program entrants have large family sizes. Of the 375 families which arrived under the Humanitarian Program in 2001-2005, 86 were families of 6 people or more and 29 families were of 8 – 10 people or more (DIMIA, 2006c). The Tasmanian public housing system has only 11 properties for larger families across the entire state – all are fully occupied. On average applicants are waiting 80 weeks to be housed in these larger properties (Bresnehan, pers. com., 2007). The average number of bedrooms per dwelling in Tasmania is 2.9, slightly below the national average (ABS, 2006) and housing affordability decreases with housing size even for families in receipt of extra income support such as Family Tax Benefit (Anglicare, 2007).

[5] The study used Chamberlain and MacKenzie's 3-tier classification of homelessness. This classification defines primary homelessness as those situations where people literally have no roof over their heads, secondary homelessness as people living in insecure or short-term accommodation, and tertiary homeless as those people who live in private boarding houses for extended periods, where the accommodation is considered sub-standard due to the absence of basic facilities.

Affordability is an issue for refugees in the private rental market. A recent survey (Anglicare 2007) found that none of the 420 private rental properties advertised in Tasmania on 17 March 2007 would have been affordable for a person on Newstart Allowance. This means that while the percentage of properties available to be rented in the Tasmanian private rental market (the vacancy rate) is officially 2.3% in Hobart and 1.8% in Launceston (REIT, 2007) , for low income earners it is effectively 0%. The very small number of flats or houses which are affordable for low income renters and the pressure on settlement services to find permanent housing for new arrivals to move into on arrival, or to transit into from on arrival accommodation, means that the first home the new arrivals are moved into can be inappropriate to their needs and distant from services.

The affordable housing crisis is also a huge problem for settlement services. IHSS providers are required to find long-term housing for new arrivals but face the problem of placing at times unskilled tenants in an intensely competitive housing market. IHSS providers report that service funds are at times used to secure tenancies weeks prior to the arrival of refugees to ensure there is a house available, and moreover that there are enormous difficulties in moving new entrants on from the On Arrival Accommodation. Currently some tenancy training is available for new entrants through the Private Rental Tenancy Support Service.

4.9 Health issues for refugee communities

Refugees as a group have generally poor health and specific health requirements, including torture and trauma counselling, which differ from the resident population (eg Allotey, 2003; DIMIA, 2003a). Refugees face many problems in accessing effective health care on settlement. These include cultural and language issues, financial restraints, lack of understanding of service systems and a lack of understanding by health service providers (see for example, Davidson et al, 2004). Some refugees also have limited access to health care due to visa restrictions.

The mental health needs of refugee arrivals are acknowledged in the settlement process with torture and trauma counselling provided as part of the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy. For longer term counselling people can access the Phoenix Centre, a torture and trauma counselling service. Research suggests that a substantial number of refugees settled in Australia have been subjected to severe trauma and torture. Clinical studies have found that between 39 and 100% of refugees suffer from post traumatic stress disorder, while 47 – 72% of refugees suffer from depression (quoted in FASSTT, 2005). In addition, a majority of entrants have physical and mental health problems related directly to torture experiences or trauma associated with refugee experiences. Histories of torture and trauma can impact on people's capacity to care for their own health, develop trust in and rapport with health care providers – especially for those from regimes where people in positions of authority were involved in supervising or perpetrating torture – and their capacity to tolerate invasive or anxiety producing procedures (VFST, 2004: 13)

In addition to these concerns, refugees come from some of the poorest countries in the world and may have experienced prolonged periods of deprivation. Infectious and parasitic diseases no longer of concern in Australia may be common in their countries of origin (Toole, quoted in VFST, 2004). Refugees have also had limited or disrupted access to health care (ibid). Refugee women may have particular health and social support needs due to experiences of physical and sexual violence, their responsibility for large families and their vulnerability to social isolation.

Research suggests that economic and social circumstances, particularly in the early post arrival period can negatively impact on refugee health and wellbeing. They can compound existing health problems, inhibit recovery, and even contribute to the development of new disorders.

In spite of these considerable challenges, the resilience of refugee communities is extraordinary. Of interest to this research are the findings of a West Australian study which looked at the experiences of refugee job seekers. Using self-assessed measures of life satisfaction across a range of life satisfaction domains, it found that the interviewees expressed a high level of satisfaction with their health status (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; 31).

4.10 Education issues for refugee children

DIAC's 2003 review of settlement services also identified a number of problems facing humanitarian entrant children in schools. The review found that nationally the degree of support given to these children differed according to the capacity of individual schools and that in particular, age-graded classes can be an impediment to effective learning for some of these children (DIMIA,2003b:136). Young refugees entering the Tasmanian education system have a range of special support needs – these may include adjusting to a new school system, adjusting to studying in English, pre-migration trauma, deprivation of normal developmental opportunities, and problems arising from disrupted education.

Refugee children who do not have functional English are eligible for Commonwealth funded English as a Second Language – New Arrival (ESL-NA) tuition delivered in the form of a per capita grant. At the moment this equates to approximately 80 hours ESL teacher support per student, allocated at 2.5 hours tuition per week. Beyond this funding ongoing support is given using Commonwealth funding allocated for a broader target group of educationally disadvantaged students – Strategic Assistance for Increasing Student Outcomes (SAISO) funding (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007).

Submissions to the review of settlement services stressed that the number of ESL hours available to students was insufficient, particularly for young people starting in the Australian school system as high school students with little time to learn English and establish vocational skills (DIMIA, 2003b). Research suggests that secondary and senior secondary students require longer periods of intensive support than early childhood and primary students, particular if they have had interrupted schooling, social/ emotional development or trauma issues that impact on learning, or if they have no literacy in their first language (Tasmanian Education Department, 2007).

Some state governments are reporting that with increased levels of trauma in children arriving in Australia more intensive interventions are required and that this increase in demand is coinciding with a deterioration in the ESL program access across primary and secondary schools (SMH, 20/11/2004). In Tasmania, ESL funding has recently been boosted with funds provided by the State Government as well as the employment of three bilingual teacher aides in the South and the creation of a $20,000 uniform bursary fund for refugee children (Wriedt, 2004 and 2004a). The last Federal budget included a commitment of increased funds to support the ESL program.

4.11 Employment and refugees

Australia is enjoying an unprecedented period of economic prosperity with very low unemployment rates and shortages of skilled and unskilled labour. Yet within this labour market, refugees continue to have higher unemployment rates, lower earnings and lower levels of occupational attainment than other migrants (Williams & Batrouney, 1998 in Taylor, 2004). In part this is due to significant structural changes in the Australian labour market. Tasmania reflects the national labour market in that employment in many low skilled occupations has declined with many people at the bottom end of the labour market concentrated in part-time or casualised work (Madden, 2003). The Australian industry Group estimates that 86% of occupations now require post-secondary qualifications (AIGroup 2006, quoted in ACOSS, 2007).

In addition to this emphasis on skilled and qualified labour, a review of the literature sketches the barriers to successful participation in the labour market for refugees. These include those experienced by all migrants: language, education and training, labour market knowledge, access to formal and informal networks, poor provision of advice (including guidance and training), cultural transition issues and pre-arrival experiences. In addition there are those specific to refugees, which can be greater than those of non-refugee immigrants. These include unpreparedness for departure, lack of possessions and community networks, the experience of torture and trauma, family reunion issues, discrimination

in the labour market, child-care issues, lack of relevant skills or unrecognised qualifications, disrupted education, lack of transport and low self-confidence (Kyle et al, 2004; Taylor, 2004; Waxman, 1998). A recent study of the employment experiences of skilled refugees in Western Australia also found that there was the persistence of a segmented labour market, where racially and culturally visible migrants and refugees in particular, despite their skills levels, are allocated unattractive jobs. The researchers felt that another mechanism which directed refugees towards low-skilled employment was the initiative to direct refugees to regional areas where there were labour shortages, usually in low-skilled and unattractive jobs such as fruit-picking and meat processing, reinforcing employers' perceptions that refugees should be available for such work (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007).

This research also found that in addition to the structural disadvantages faced by refugees in the labour market, such as those listed above, unsatisfactory employment outcomes were also the result of discrimination on the basis of race, religion and ethnic origin and that employers were actively discriminating on the basis of 'soft skills' such as Australian cultural knowledge or because of discrimination based on accent or visible difference. At the same time the employers interviewed almost universally denied the existence of discrimination in the Australian workplace (Colic-Peisker, Tilbury, 2007).

Refugees must seek work after they have been in Australia for six months. Assistance to find eligible job-seekers employment is the responsibility of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). This assistance is delivered through the Job Network, the network of contracted private and community organisations which replaced the Government provided Commonwealth Employment Service. An outcomes-based payments system means that these organisations focus on clients who are easier to place in permanent work. The level of employment support a jobseeker receives is determined by the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI). Refugee status itself does not identify a jobseeker as having special needs, however certain DIAC identified countries of origin, English language proficiency and special causes of disadvantage such as experiences of torture and trauma can result in refugees being classified as eligible for access to support services.

Recent reviews of Job Network services nationally have found they do not meet the needs of refugees. Common concerns focussed on poor information provision by Job Network providers leading to a poor understanding of the division between Centrelink and job network services, poor understanding of rights and obligations, and poor understanding of the appeal mechanisms available to them. The consequence for refugee clients of these services was that people do not get effective assistance and that fines for failure to meet 'administrative' obligations are common (Kyle et al, 2004; iii). Similarly, interviews with skilled jobseekers from refugee backgrounds has found that the refugees were "relatively dissatisfied" with the Job Network and that "there was a mismatch between their perception of these services and that of the service providers" (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007:27)

There are specialist providers within the Job Network which deliver Intensive Support Services to more disadvantaged jobseekers. However, none of these exist in Tasmania (Australian JobSearch, 2007). Young people with histories of torture and trauma are eligible to be referred to the Job Placement Employment and Training (JPET) program, and adults with such histories can be referred to the Personal Support Program (PSP). These programs are designed to assist them to overcome barriers to workforce participation, but it appears that in Tasmania few refugees are being referred to them. It may be that a desire to find work quickly is prompting them to choose mainstream Job Network providers.

4.12 Regional settlement and refugees

Current policies promote the settlement of refugees in regional areas[6]. As Stanovic and Taylor argue, this is not just a consequence of considerations of humanitarian obligations to support successful settlement, but is also

influenced by population strategies and the economic needs of regional areas (Stanovic & Taylor, 2005).

Tasmania has the highest regional settlement rate of refugees of all states and territories. Over the past five years around 38% of arrivals have been settled in regional areas in contrast to a national average of 6.5%. Since 2000-01 the majority of refugee arrivals who have come to regional Tasmania have settled in Greater Launceston, with the remainder in the north-west (mainly Burnie and Devonport) and a small minority outside these areas in the regional south and north-east (DIMA, 2006c). Refugees also arrive in regional areas through their own relocation, to be closer to work or friends. This does not appear to be a characteristic of communities in regional Tasmania, where the secondary movement appears to be largely out of Tasmania and towards larger metropolitan centres where there are critical masses of an ethnic/social/faith group (Boyce & Madden, 2000).

Research suggests that policies to promote the settlement of refugees in regional areas needs to ensure the following areas are well-resourced: employment, education and training, housing, English tuition, interpreters and bilingual workers and settlement services. It also recommends that income support levels are addressed (Stanovic & Taylor, 2005). A funding allocation of $1.5m in the 2007/08 Budget has been dedicated to assist with training regional service providers and to develop a data system to capture the work skills of refugees to help matching them to employment opportunities.

DIAC has accepted that service delivery to regional areas is difficult, with the greater costs associated with a dispersed client group, higher operating costs, and an absence of infrastructure such as housing and transport (DIMA, 2006c). Therefore, 'unlinked refugees', that is, those refugees who do not have social or family links which might influence their settlement location have in recent years been directed to Greater Hobart and Launceston rather than the North-West Coast.

It has been pointed out that much of the research material on settlement in regional Australia has focussed on practical concerns about the capacity of services to support refugee settlement, and that therefore there is a lack of research with positive findings in this area. However, it has also been noted that the research runs counter to much anecdotal information which suggests that there are many positive aspects to the experience of settling in regional Australia (Campbell, 2007).

4.13 Family Reunion

Family reunion is considered a central part of the resettlement process for refugees for both humanitarian and practical reasons. The natural human need to be with family is made more anxious when loved ones have been left in precarious or even dangerous situations. The UNHCR "promotes family reunification to protect and preserve the unity of this fundamental unit of society, to restore basic dignity to a refugee's life, and especially to provide protection for children under the tutelage of parents or other related adults."

A number of policy directions have merged to create significant stress for people seeking family reunion in Australia. Provisions have been introduced to allow family members to enter through that part of the humanitarian program called the 'special humanitarian program'. While this policy had the positive of reducing processing times and costs for refugee families it has meant that their numbers are curtailed within the general refugee quota. Secondly, the Australian Government has introduced a policy linking onshore visas with the offshore humanitarian program – meaning that every visa given to an asylum seeker in Australia is subtracted from the total available for the offshore program. Refugees still have the option of bringing their families to Australia through the family stream of the migration program but they must meet the substantial application fees and will receive no settlement

[6] The term 'regional' has different meanings for different Government agencies and jurisdictions. In this report it is used to mean all areas outside the Hobart metropolitan area. This is the definition used by DIAC.

or Centrelink support for the first two years their relatives are in the country. In addition, Australian Government immigration policies have increasingly emphasised skilled migration, with a decreased emphasis on family reunion in the migration program (Taylor, 2004:10).

Other significant problems exist for refugees in demonstrating relationship, including our concentration on nuclear family as the relationships of most meaning, and the difficulties refugees have in producing documentary evidence of relationships. The UNHCR emphasises that in family reunion the principle of dependency must be flexible, expansive, culturally sensitive and situation specific.

> Given the disruptive and traumatic factors of the refugee experience, the impact of persecution and the stress factors associated with flight to safety, refugee families are often reconstructed out of the remnants of various households, who depend on each other for mutual support and survival. These families may not fit neatly into preconceived notions of a nuclear family (husband, wife and minor children). In some cases the difference in the composition and definition of the family is determined by cultural factors, in others it is a result of the refugee experience. A broad definition of a family unit –what may be termed an extended family—is necessary toaccommodate the peculiarities in any given refugee situation, and helps minimize further disruption and potential separation of individual members during the resettlement process (UNHCR, 2001).

The impact on refugee communities of the failure to reunite with family members is profound. For example, a recent study of Somali women in Melbourne found that family separation was the primary source of their sadness and anxiety (McMichael and Ahmed, 2003 in Taylor 2004).

> *When we first came we had a problem, thinking how am I going to live this life? We had problems with the language, the money.*
> ***(Man, Central Africa, Hobart)***

5. Refugees' experiences against settlement indicators: social participation and wellbeing

This section analyses the data against those indicators of settlement broadly grouped as indicators of social participation. These indicators include English proficiency, satisfaction with life in Australia and intentions towards Australian citizenship. Strong themes also emerged from the data of other key services and projects which had an impact on the social participation of the interviewees. Also included in this section, therefore, are findings on their experiences of settlement services and their ability to access transport and childcare. Findings about the barriers to social participation such as experiences of racism and social isolation are also included in this section.

> *Now I am happy because now I have Australian friends, I have friends from different cultures.*
> ***(Young man, West Africa, Hobart)***

5.1 Settlement services: Pre-embarkation, Services in transit, Services on arrival: IHSS, SGP and Proposers

Pre-embarkation: AUSCO, the cultural orientation program

Since 2003, DIAC has conducted the Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) Program in a number of refugee camps across the refugee-source countries. This program delivers a significant amount of orientation information to refugees prior to leaving for Australia. Without these orientation sessions, new entrants rely on the brief interviews with Australian embassy staff for information. They are vulnerable to acute feelings of social isolation and anxiety.

> *When we went to the interview with the Australian people, they said Australia is a good country and everybody is friendly, and that is all. So we didn't know if it is cold or if it is hot and we didn't know we were coming to Tasmania, we thought we were going to*

Sydney or Melbourne. But when we arrived in Sydney they said we have to catch one more aeroplane. We knew it was Hobart but we thought Hobart was a suburb in Sydney. We saw lots of bush and we thought oh no they are just going to throw us down there and it was scary. When we came here nobody speaks our language and we thought oh no, it is the end of the world. You better trust me, it was not easy. It was scary.

(Young woman, Central Africa, Hobart)

The objectives of the AUSCO course are 'to assist with anxieties people may have about settlement, provide an initial introduction to aspects of Australian life to assist settlement, create realistic expectations for life in Australia and help entrants acquire information concerning Australian culture prior to arrival' (DIAC, 2007a). AUSCO is not intended to replace the onshore services provided through the IHSS but it is seen as the beginning of the settlement process.

A number of research participants described being part of processes which were clearly the formalised AUSCO orientation processes. While the level of absorption of information varied from individual to individual, people recalled a surprising level of detail about an eclectic range of information from these sessions, including pieces of information about available settlement services, general cost of living, Centrelink, Medicare, and tenancy requirements through to Aboriginal history, social attitudes to littering and the age of consent to sexual activity. Content clearly designed to help people manage their expectations was noted, including useful information about cost of living, unemployment rates and the recognition of overseas qualifications. Collectively a great deal of information had been retained and usefully applied in the settlement process. However, the meaning that people attached to the information varied enormously depending on their own life experiences and their capacity to absorb the information – for many the information sessions were summarised as "we were told it was a good country and we would have a better life".

Concerns have repeatedly been expressed by the Tasmanian Government about an inadequate level and standard of information offered in the course about Tasmania. These concerns were reflected in the discussions with the interviewees. Even those who had participated in the AUSCO orientation felt they had received limited information about Tasmania. In some instances they were not told of their actual destination until immediately prior to departure, in others the destination changed or orientation was completed and then they waited long periods to actually depart. On being asked to reflect on these orientation sessions, the research participants identified three major gaps in information.

The first was a briefing on the climate they were coming to. The shock of the cold weather in Tasmania was commented on repeatedly by the research participants. Some had been told that Australia was hot and had arrived in Tasmania in mid-winter dressed in light summer clothes. Others had been warned they were coming to a cool climate but were mentally and physically unprepared for how miserable cold weather made them feel.

Because of lack of information what I wore that day was jeans and a shirt – I don't know, I thought everything would be warm, you know. And when I got to the airport it was terrible. It was so cold it was hard for me to stand and hard for me to talk because I was shivering so much. It was July. And the person who picked me up from the airport had to get out of his jumper and he had an extra jumper in his car. And I had to have two jumpers on and after we got home I had to sit next to the heater. I was terrified to be so cold and I thought this is the life now; you are always going to be like this. I want to die. It was the first time I had been cold. I had never had cold weather before. So that was a little bit hard.

(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Before you come you should be told that Tasmania is a very cold place, very cold. It is not good for someone that is afraid of cold. This state is really cold. It is freezing. So

when someone is coming here you should be well prepared; if you are coming to Hobart, mentally prepared. It is very cold, this place.
(Woman, West Africa, Hobart)

The other two major information gaps in the formal orientation process identified were realistic assessments of the employment and housing situations in Tasmania. A number of interviewees felt they had been misled about employment opportunities in Tasmania. Many also reported being told that they would be given government housing until they found work. They had interpreted this to mean free housing until they found employment. Their actual experience, of periods in hostels, and/or being rapidly placed in the private rental market, with frequent moves between houses, high rentals and anxiety about homelessness, did not reflect the information they had been given. It was also noted by some interviewees that the orientation sessions had been delivered by people who had never visited Australia, limiting their knowledge of the reality of life here.

When you came to Australia your expectations are high. In orientation before we come, we are told when you come to Australia they will give you a government house and you will stay there until you find a job and then you look for your own house. That was my expectation; that's what they told me 'they'll give you a government house and you will stay there until you find another house'.
(Man, West Africa, Launceston)

Two specific concerns of interest named by individuals as issues on which they would have liked more information prior to arrival in Australia, and still had ongoing concerns about, were the legal and practical issues around the circumcision of infant boys and Australian funerary practices.

Services in transit

Unfortunately for a few interviewees, the flight to Australia and then on domestic flights to Tasmania was highly stressful. It is the responsibility of the IOM to organise international in transit support, while individual agencies are contracted by DIAC to provide it at Australian airports. Occasionally systems fail, with distressing consequences. Unable to communicate with airport staff, at times ignorant of their destination and unfamiliar with air travel, some people told of finding their way to gate lounges at international airports by sheer luck. A refugee from the Former Yugoslavia who arrived in Tasmania three years ago told the story of being given no assistance at Rome Airport to catch the connecting flight to Australia.

We got a letter from UNHCR which said we can't speak English but we don't know where we must go when we had to change planes and we just didn't know where to go.
(Woman, Southern Europe, Burnie)

Australian services had also failed. Some interviewees had been left adrift in Australian airports while; hungry, thirsty, without Australian currency and highly anxious. A woman described arriving 5 years ago.

When I arrived in Sydney I was really excited but then after I was disappointed because nobody coming in Sydney and then we just sitting in airport. And then I'm asking myself, is this really the place I can go and be proud and say 'the people they are waiting for me'? And I just really get angry and sad and I talk to my son, "Can you please ask somebody?". Because I couldn't speak. And then my son did and the lady is a quite nice lady she just say follow us. She say, "This is the place, stay waiting here'. We just say thank you. We just sitting there, no water, nothing. You're sitting in an airport and kids really sad and everybody just sitting until we left about 8:00 and when we to here in airport we find one African man and two ladies from Migrant Resource Centre. They are social workers they just pick up and take us to the hotel.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Services on arrival: Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) Services and the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) Services

When you arrive you can't speak any English and you're like you're lost somewhere.
(Woman, Central Africa, Hobart)

New entrants arriving in Australia who are offshore humanitarian arrivals or people arriving under the Special Humanitarian Program are entitled to support from a comprehensive array of settlement services. The main providers in the north of Tasmania are Centacare and the Migrant Resource Centre (south) and in the north, the Migrant Resource Centre (north).

Services on arrival: IHSS and SGP

The IHSS is a suite of services which aims to provide intensive initial settlement support to newly arrived humanitarian entrants. This includes case coordination, information and referrals, on arrival reception and assistance, assistance to find appropriate and affordable accommodation, and short term torture and trauma counselling services. An important role is played by the IHSS provider in coordinating the other services. These services are provided for 6 months after which people may be eligible for further support from Settlement Grants Program funded services.

An outcome of the introduction of competitive tendering and the transition to multiple service providers in the south means that there are now a number of agencies providing the IHSS and SGP services. DIAC recognises that service integration and coordination is critical for clients with multiple needs and has stated, "In an ideally integrated system, humanitarian entrants would perceive the IHSS to be one system, even if the services are provided by different agencies and in different locations" (DIMIA, 2003). The findings of this research would suggest that while new entrants are finding the service system is largely meeting their needs in areas such as health and initial cultural and practical orientation, it has two key problems: it is not providing sustainable housing outcomes and it is of too short a duration.

Good practice

Different services helped me, and Centrelink. The support group – a church group - they helped me; taking me to hospital and collecting me for shopping, helping me get medicines. They have been really great.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Research participants repeatedly described feeling disorientated, exhausted and overwhelmed on arrival in Australia. The support received from settlement services and community volunteers in the first hours, days and weeks not only appeared to be critical to the research participants successfully engaging with Australian services in the first years here but to have an important emotional and ceremonial dimension. The efforts made by IHSS services to ensure that interpreters and community volunteers were present as well as the IHSS case worker made a big impression on new arrivals. As one participant stated "When I came to Hobart I did get a very good welcome ceremony from the people on arrival".

The Case Management service and the comprehensive orientation provided by the IHSS services – currently through Centacare in the south and the Migrant Resource Centre in the north and previously by the two Migrant Resource Centres – was also identified as being of critical support in helping people to begin to get an understanding of the legal, medical and service systems they needed to navigate through. Individual support workers and case managers had made very positive impressions on many of the new arrivals. The importance of comfortable and good quality on-arrival accommodation for new entrants was highlighted both by the many participants who described the intense feeling of relief they experienced at entering that accommodation and the disappointment expressed by those who were taken to backpackers or hotels for their on-arrival accommodation. Having professional support and particularly bilingual support in dealing with the complexity of their new life was also critical.

In those two weeks, they [the settlement services] provide us [with] food, because in those days we not having money from

Centrelink. And in those days [IHSS provider] came to our aid to register us and they open an account for us, they showed us the supermarkets, every two days they would come to the house and take us around the town to know where we can buy things we need. And they look for a doctor that would be our GP. That was very helpful.
(Woman, West Africa, Hobart)

I arrived in Hobart. It was very good for me. I had a good supporters. There were so many people that were so good to me, arriving it was very great, got help from many people my case worker, she was so good to me, showed me many things. This is good in Hobart, this is not good in Hobart. Showed me how to get money from an ATM, showed me the different banks, take me for a walk to the different parks, that was so great because I have a little boy.
(Woman, West Africa, Hobart

The importance of the bilingual workers to the settlement services was highlighted by the number of people who identified individual bilingual workers as one of the most important supports which had aided settlement.

Problems with IHSS services: IHSS services and housing

In the current affordable housing crisis, an increasingly important and time-consuming function of the IHSS services is to find tenancies for new arrivals and to provide them with tenancy support. Intensive tenancy support is increasingly being identified as necessary for people with complex needs in both the private rental market and public housing (Anglicare, 2006). People from refugee communities who have not had the experience of living in western-style housing, with electricity, with ornamental gardens, or in tenancy situations may require support in order to sustain their tenancies – a service increasingly provided by IHSS services. Housing provision, sustainability and adequacy have therefore become points of tension between new arrivals and settlement services.

Participants repeatedly identified that a key problem for them in settlement was what they viewed as the failure of settlement services to provide them with sustainable housing. For some people the issue began with their brief tenure in On Arrival Accommodation. Refugees are housed in this accommodation rent-free for a brief period, with rental payments requested once their Centrelink income is organized. It was pointed out that as people with no assets, paying out a large proportion of their small incomes slowed their capacity to establish themselves and their homes. Some found the compulsion to move out of the On Arrival Accommodation unsettling and upsetting.

A number of interviewees were critical of the failure of settlement services to include them in the process of selecting the first home they moved into after their brief stay in On Arrival Accommodation. IHSS services are required to show new entrants a minimum of three properties but many entrants were unhappy with the quality, location and price of the properties offered. Some reported that they were given leases to sign for properties they had not viewed. Many reported that they moved out of the IHSS located property as soon as the first lease expired, leading to long periods of insecure housing as they moved and moved again looking for secure and affordable housing. There was also the further difficulty that this first lease often expired after they had exited the IHSS, requiring them to navigate the rental market with less specialist support.

We were at migrant house [On Arrival Accommodation] for a few days before they [case workers] started looking for another house. The house they took for us, they never took us to look at that house and the house they took was very expensive, so we manage to live there for 6 months and then we started looking for another house. I didn't like that when they look for a house for us they never took us to look to see if we like the house or if we like the price. Because of the price they took it because it was not over 30% of our income but it was difficult for us to pay.
(Woman, West Africa, Hobart)

My main problem is with housing. When I first came here I couldn't speak any English and [IHSS provider] they find houses for us and it would be very good if they give us a choice that is different because sometimes we would like a different house – we are told that housing you can't get now and maybe in time you can get a new house but at the moment there is no housing. So sometimes we take the house because there are no choices with the houses and sometimes that is difficult.
(Man, Central Africa, Hobart)

The lack of available housing had also meant that new arrivals felt under pressure from settlement services to co-habit in combinations which were stressful or culturally inappropriate. One interviewee reported that since arrival in Tasmania she and her child had been required to share a house with a family unknown to her prior to her arrival in Australia.

We are two families in the one house and the lease has expired. When we arrived here we lived in transit house because we were told they were going to look for separate houses for us. They couldn't get any so they moved us into one house. Now we have been here for 5 months, the lease has expired. We didn't sign it again because we can't live together in a small house. [IHSS provider] has been looking for another house for us but it's not so easy to get a house. The time has passed and we don't have anywhere else to go. We don't know Hobart – we will live anywhere we can get a house. We have not looked at houses with [IHSS provider]. [IHSS provider] does the looking although I am not sure they are actually looking. There are 4 people living in the house – 2 adults and 2 children. The house has 3 bedrooms so we have to share. We would prefer to live in separate houses; we are not families, we just met here. It is a problem. It makes it hard because she got a 14 year old, this is a baby, so it sometimes makes mums angry. So it's not easy.
(Woman, Central Africa, Hobart)

Settlement services' expectations that kinfolk share houses was sometimes counter to the experiences or cultural norms of the families who may have lived with gender segregated housing or with different branches of the same family housed separately. In the following passage a young man describes how the family stress caused by forced cohabitation quickly caused his household to fall apart.

At first when I arrived here it was very hard. We got support from our support group and my case worker and they were very friendly. After they found this house …They just said tomorrow you people have to leave this [transit] house, you have to go to a new house. The case worker from [IHSS provider] brought the lease. And I said "Mum don't sign it" but my mother she signed the lease - we had to take it. And the problem was because when we were in the refugee camp, my mum and I we were not staying together. My mum was staying with the children and I was staying in a different place with my brother. So when we arrived here I said, "I am expecting a separate place, the boys in one place and the mum and the children with another place." They said, 'No. As long as you come under your mum no matter that you are over age, we don't give you different accommodation, you have to stay under your mum' and that was feeling very bad to me. The house was very expensive that they found for us. It was $960 a fortnight. Mum signed the lease for 6 months. After 4 months I give up. I said, "No. I can't do this, Mum because I'm a big boy". So I moved over to my friend's place. My mother has moved too because it was too expensive. ***(Man, West Africa, Hobart)***

Problems with IHSS: six months of service

Jenny was a really, really good lady. She was really helpful to us and helped, like when my daughter went to school for the first time she went with her and helped her. She was very helpful. Jenny helped us for 6 months. When she went out, after 6 months, [IHSS provider] called us and they said we cannot do anything for you anymore so you have to do your own business, it is all your own responsibility we cannot help you anymore.
(Woman, South-central Asia, Launceston)

The intensive support provided by the IHSS services is limited to 6 months for new entrants

although this can be extended to 9 months for people with complex needs. All the refugees interviewed indicated experiencing complex health and adjustment issues which they felt required support for up to 12 months after arrival and which appeared to require complex case management support particularly when much of the first twelve months is dominated by health and housing crises. However, many of the interviewees who have arrived in the last 2 to 3 years reported being required to navigate their own way into mainstream community services within 6 months of arrival.

> *From the beginning it is not easy for anyone. Health problem, house problem, everything, because maybe before you are eating natural things, but here they are eating things from shops. Everything is changed, everything: weather, food everything. Your health can change because of food. It takes time to get to know this. Because for refugees, the country they left is different, everything, different culture, here multiculture is everything. Everything is advancing here, before there is nothing. Everything is changed - the life, the school, the college, English, banking, Centrelink, the [IHSS provider]… it is hard to change in six months. It is hard time, not just easy for anyone. Because we have to just look around for the houses, 2 months in backpackers is gone and then you live 4 months and then you live somewhere 6 months. It is not easy.*
> ***(Man, South-central Asia, Launceston)***

> *For us we think even one year is not enough because I have been to hospital several times, I can't go on my own, I know where is the hospital but to go inside is a problem, I can't find the way to go, which floor. So we think our time with [IHSS provider] will be finished we don't know what will happen, we think one year or more is enough.*
> ***(Woman, Central Africa, Hobart)***

The withdrawal of services while people were still feeling disoriented and vulnerable obviously generated feelings of great anxiety and fear. The language used by the interviewees to describe this termination of service implies a sense of rupture ('we are finished with you now' 'we can't help you any more'). The word 'abandoned' was used by a number of interviewees. In this context it is worth noting that some research participants, who had been in Australia between 6 and 9 months at the time of interviewed still reported 'feeling very scared' as their main feeling about life in Australia.

> *Knowing that [IHSS provider]'s help is about to stop, it's like life has stopped, we are worried, we have no family around, with [IHSS provider] you feel you have protection so we are very worried. And sometimes we get letters from Centrelink or somewhere else and because we don't know, they can't understand us, just [IHSS provider] will come and visit you several times and you show to them.* ***(Woman, Central Africa, Hobart)***

> *We get support from [IHSS provider] for 6 months only but it's not enough, in 6 months you are not able to speak English, you are still like you are new. For example, because I am not with [IHSS provider] anymore and last time I had to go to the hospital and I used to have sponsors to talk for me at reception and then I went on my own and it was hard for me even to say I need an interpreter so I think that one year would be enough especially regarding my health and things like that.*
> ***(Woman, Central Africa, Hobart)***

Services on arrival: volunteer support

Under the restructure of settlement services that saw the development of the IHSS model, volunteers were theoretically offered a choice of either working on a range of support needs with new entrants, or concentrating their time and resources on providing friendship and social support. Submissions from volunteers to the review of settlement services argued that their contribution must have some practical focus in the initial phases of settlement to be both effective and genuinely supportive (DIMIA, 2003:187). Tasmania has a particularly high level of volunteering to assist refugee settlement and it is clear from participants' narratives that many volunteers are providing a key role in a coordinated case management response.

Good practice: volunteer support

> *When I think about people in Tasmania, I think like I am living with my mother and father. Our support people were really great. My husband was not feeling well when we first arrived. He was sick and he had to go to hospital. Our support people helped us a lot and they are still supporting us.*
> ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

The volunteer support groups play a significant role in breaking down the sense of isolation and disconnection that refugees feel. Time and again the interviewees cited the support of the volunteers as a key intervention which helped them to deal with the magnitude of problems they faced in their first months in spite of the difficulties in communication. The sense of reassurance they got from the volunteer support contrasted vividly with the general feeling of vulnerability they described.

> *When we first came we had problems with the language, the money and the help from the Government to pay their money because we were not working. And we got support from workers from [IHSS provider] and from volunteers who took us to do shopping and to show us around. We were very grateful to see them come to our house even though we could not speak English and we could not communicate. So they encouraged us to learn English, to settle and to make friends. With them it was very easy, these volunteers.*
> ***(Man, Central Africa, Hobart)***

> *The people, the system that was put in place was the most important thing that really made refugees fit in very well: the support group and then the organisations that work with refugees made things very easy. I was scared it was just going to be a big drop and they would say 'ok you now are in Tasmania. Bye'. Because I have faced a lot of difficulties despite the fact that I speak English. These people were able to help me and take me and get benefits organised and show things and give an orientation which was something I was looking for. So in that way things became more easy for me. When you have somebody always that is there with you, and you are given numbers you need, and someone who can help, someone you can call if you need some help, someone who will come whatever time it is… that was a big help that I really appreciated from the support group. That was a very important mechanism that helped me.*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

Quite a few research participants described their relationships with the volunteers as genuine friendships and some of these friendships remained close years after formal settlement support had finished. This provided them with both a sense of emotional wellbeing and a resourced network of established community members who assisted them in times of difficulty.

Problems: volunteer support

However, some narratives suggest a volunteer support program stretched thin. With the volunteer support groups providing an essential orientation and acculturation role, it was of concern that quite a few interviewees, including recent arrivals, reported that they had had little or almost no contact with volunteers. Some interviewees reported that they had only had one volunteer make contact with them, making the support dependent on the availability of one person alone and raising concerns about its sustainability.

> *No, we did not have volunteers come to the house. We had one volunteer. And I remember her taking us to catch the bus to go to TAFE and the second day she came to see us we were already on the bus going to TAFE so we knew how to do it so she never came back. She thought we knew how to do it.* ***(Young woman, Central Africa, Hobart)***

> *No support, we only had support group for 3 months and then she said she is going away to Sydney and after that she didn't appear and we didn't get enough help from support group and didn't have any other help.*
> ***(Man, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

A number of interviewees who felt they had had good support from volunteers commented on what they felt was an abrupt termination of contact when they hit the six month anniversary

of their arrival in Tasmania. Quite a few identified that this support was withdrawn at the same time that the intensive settlement support was withdrawn and that they were just starting to deal with complex issues such as trying to find housing, ongoing health issues and emerging family stresses. Some interviewees reported contacting volunteers and asking them for help, to be told that they had to transfer their assistance to new arrivals.

When our support person said she is not going to help us anymore we said, can you find any other person who can help us, who could support us, who can replace you? But she told us the government said she can only come for six months and now she has to stop. Always we are struggling. My husband he is at home, he is not well, he can't do much.
(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

For me I am still looking for people who can help me. I shouldn't be abandoned because I can't speak English first of all – I have difficulties with language as you can see now, and secondly there is a problem with the child and I have to take him to the doctor and I need help with that too. So lack of language and taking the children to school – those are the things that I most want help with. I did call one of the support group, a lady and she replied saying she was too busy and she couldn't come because she was looking after new arrivals. I didn't feel good. I knew one person in Tasmania at that time but that person was working.
(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

During the support from the support group I didn't face so much difficulty because they were always around at any time but the difficulties came when those people had left and they said now you have to look after yourself. It was very hard. I did ask for help because it took me by sudden.
(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Problems: Need for information for service providers

The lack of specific information available to IHSS workers and volunteers about new arrivals' countries of origin or the refugee camps they had been living in was evident in discussions about the new entrants' first contact with them. Participants described being greeted by well meaning workers who explained in detail how to use taps, how to turn on televisions, and who in one instance caused great offence by demonstrating to some new arrivals how to use a toothbrush. New arrivals fluent in verbal and written English, were alarmed by requests from volunteers that they sign documents, including bank authorisations that they were not given the opportunity to read ('*How did I know I was not being asked to sign my death warrant?"*).

They had this thought, that we were from nowhere, the middle of the desert or something. The country [of first asylum] I came from, it's not a developed country, but it's improved enough. It has everything, but the problem why we came here is because they wanted to send us back to our country where there is war and everything is destroyed and we didn't want to go back and be killed. [The worker] took my mum to the kitchen and showed her the sink and said "this is cold water this is hot water. This hot water is always hot." OK!! They show us an iron. "This is an iron, you can iron like this." This was really funny for me.
(Man, South-central Asia, Launceston)

People wanted me to sign forms without letting me read them and without taking me to where the services are. They didn't take me there and say if you want to get this, this is where you need to come. They should have sat me down and given me all the information. I am not a blind man! They should be telling me what is happening and inform me so that I know because they wouldn't be there all the time for me. They should give me the opportunity to do it for myself. At one point I refused to sign. They tell me, oh we need to go to the bank and do this. They were asking me to sign some authorization giving it to them to do this on my behalf. I said no.
(Man, West Africa, Hobart)

Services on arrival: Proposers

Members of refugee initiated communities can potentially bring friends or family members to Australia through the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP). If their relatives hold humanitarian visas, they can 'propose' for them to come through the SHP. Sponsors have certain obligations – either they or the person they sponsor must pay for travel costs, they must meet the new entrant at the airport, provide for their immediate accommodation needs, help them find permanent accommodation and provide them with an orientation to life in Australia.

Over time, this has been a significantly critiqued part of the service system, as the burden on proposers has been heavy and has led to many financial, housing and orientation problems for the SHP entrants. Recently, proposers have received greater help in supporting entrants, including, critically, access to the IHSS for them. This has meant that SHP arrivals can have access to health, counselling, orientation and case management services for refugee arrivals and all proposers are contacted to be informed of this prior to the arrival of their friends/relatives. However, this may not translate into the new arrivals being put in touch with services. IHSS services are not necessarily informed of the arrival of SHP entrants in Tasmania as DIAC is only informed of the travel arrangements of those people assisted by the International Organisation for Migration Refugee Travel Loan Fund. Further, while proposers are briefed about the IHSS services available to their SHP entrants, access to these services is only triggered by their request for help. The request may not be made because of reasons such as lack of understanding of the system.

In the context of the housing crisis, the task of providing On Arrival Accommodation to newly arrived SHP entrants is particularly loaded as their proposers struggle to find permanent housing for them, resulting in overcrowding, potential conflict, and placing the tenancy of the proposer at risk.

Good practice: Proposers

Where proposers had strong social links and resources to draw on, they facilitated successful settlement outcomes for friends and family members. Evidence from members of the larger communities suggested they had reached a critical mass which enabled them to provide some social support to new arrivals – most critically this was done where community members had access to cars and could assist with transport, but the provision of on-arrival accommodation and orientation to services were also important functions. In addition, some research participants were supported not only by their family members, but also by the volunteer groups which had helped the first family members who had arrived in Australia through the humanitarian entrant program.

> *When I came I didn't know where I was going but at least I knew someone was there to collect me from the airport. Firstly there was my brother and secondly [my brother's support group] so things went really successfully. That really made it easy for us.* ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

Problems: Proposers

Proposers get specific assistance to meet their obligations. However, some gaps in assistance identified in this research were: a need for proposers' capacity to provide on-arrival accommodation to be assessed, and if necessary provided by IHSS services, a need for SHP entrants to receive IHSS orientation on tenants' rights and obligations, particularly around the importance of condition reports, the need for more support for SHP entrants in finding tenancies and in providing them with tenancy support, and the need for more support for SHP entrants in getting access to health services. There is also a need for SHP entrants to get access to financial counselling services to assist them to manage the debts they have incurred in travel costs and to ensure referral to accommodation services which can assist with bond and rent in advance costs.

Interviews also revealed family tensions between new entrants and their proposers where people had had to cohabitate for long periods in overcrowded circumstances, and around financial issues.

The vulnerability of new entrants arriving under the SHP is demonstrated in the story below where the sponsor, under pressure to support other family members and aware he was not fulfilling his responsibilities to the new entrants, made deliberate efforts to keep them away from settlement services.

> *My brother sponsored us. And when we got here he said, "When you were in Pakistan we did support you." I think $650 we owed him, He said, "Well now you are getting Centrelink money you should pay me back". So then we had to give him money and he didn't support us at all. And after 9 days as a guest in his house my brother found a house for us without furniture. We used to sleep on the floor, we bought second hand pillows and mattress. It was winter time, it was very difficult. [Breaks down.] It is very hard to think about the past. I said to [my husband] we should talk to somebody. Why do we live like this? Who can support us? And then I said I am going to the Department of Immigration and ask them if they can help us and my brother said "No, no, no… He wanted to frighten us to not talk to the government. We just shut up. So slowly slowly we paid him off the $650. I don't know. I think he was scared he would be in trouble because he did not support us properly – he promised to support us but he didn't. Maybe this was the reason. I don't know.*
> ***(Woman, South-central Asia, Hobart)***

5.2 Learning English

> *This country is big. And here, everything is reading and everything is writing. And if you do not know how to read you miss everything.*
> ***(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

DIAC data indicates that the self-reported English proficiency of Humanitarian Program arrivals is low. In the period 2001-2005, most entrants to Tasmania (76%) reported no or poor English proficiency (DIMIA, 2006b). English language courses are critical for people from refugee communities, however, delivery of these courses is made complex by the fact that a number of new arrivals have had low levels of schooling and many have low levels of literacy in their own language, making the acquisition of literacy in a second language far more difficult.

Learning English is the biggest hurdle to settlement confronting the research participants, as they recognised it was the tool they needed, not just to establish themselves, but also to begin to regain a sense of emotional security. Many of the participants interviewed saw making friends with Australian people as an important indicator of successful transition to their new life, and felt frustrated and isolated by their inability to communicate.

> *The most important thing for us is the language because without the language we can't do anything. We would be able to make friends if we talk English but we can't make friends because we don't speak any English. I know that if we make friends we will feel better.*
> ***(Man, Central Africa, Hobart)***

> *Language is difficult. Language is really, really difficult. You can't communicate. You can't tell other people your problems, you can't really talk about what's happening to you. We only discuss among ourselves but we think nothing is possible.*
> ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

English language support for new arrivals is concentrated in the first two years after arrival, with 510 hours offered through the Adult Migrant Education Program.

The experience of language courses

> *I go to Cosgrove high, the AMEP class are there. Our teacher tries her best – she is beautiful – she does her best, but we are struggling. Where does it go? It can't go in, it can't go in. I am struggling. I have been learning English for two years; I would like to keep going.*
> ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

Participants repeatedly stated that having the opportunity to attend English language classes was one of the main things that helped them to settle in Tasmania, and expressed many positives about their experiences of these classes. Their

relationships with individual teachers were very important to them and many spoke highly of the efforts of their teachers and the standard of the courses offered to them through the TAFE (AMEP provider). Many described strong relationships of trust with teachers at the TAFE who become important sources of information on a range of settlement issues. These relationships helped them overcome tensions they felt about being in classroom situations.

Vocational English courses

Vocational English courses were clearly highly valued as they were seen as useful and a clear pathway to employment. A number of participants made specific requests for more vocationally focussed English courses and suggested extending these into classes where people could learn trade skills as they learnt English. Overall, for many participants there was an emphasis on learning practical English which would lead to employment.

> *And also some people, they are not interested in academic studies and they just want to get a job. And when they finish TAFE, because their English is not improved they will be sent back to English classes – they do not need this. Maybe someone is having a problem and they want to help their family, and that is why they are going to get a job. When that is happening you cannot waste your time going to English classes you must go and get a job.* ***(Man, Northern Africa, Launceston)***

Barriers to learning English: Trauma and ill-health

A number of issues made English acquisition difficult. Of these the most profound was the ongoing trauma being experienced by the participants. The relentlessness of grief and loss, the sadness of not knowing the whereabouts of family members and the anxiety of unresolved attempts to sponsor family to Australia all combined to make concentration on learning difficult.

> *We try [to learn English] but it's not going in. [TAFE] is a good place to go because sometimes I can forget about my children but when I come back and I see young girls I start crying. They are good but we are not taking it in.* ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

> *The government is trying to help us but our heart is not here. We can't learn and we can't celebrate.* ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

Barriers to learning English: structural problems

While all the participants acknowledged that learning English was a priority for them, numerous practical problems stood in the way of them attending classes. These included having to spend long periods of time searching for houses for themselves or friends and family, an inability to get access to childcare services and poor public transport access to TAFE.

> *I don't go. When I came here my husband was unwell so I have to look after him and then I am pregnant and then I gave birth so I haven't had a chance to go to English classes. Now my child is unwell so I keep going all over the place to follow up his health. Once he is better I might go back but not now.* ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

There were some problems identified with the actual courses. The main issue for participants was moving from one teacher to another at the end of courses – they described this as being disruptive to their relationship with the teacher and therefore to their learning. As one participant said "It was very uncomfortable to start with a teacher that didn't know where you were up to."

Other issues for participants were the size of classes, and the lack of streaming of classes or time for individual tuition. All new arrivals attend the same classes, meaning that classes are a mix of people of all levels of education and with very different aspirations from people who wished to pursue tertiary study in Australia to people who wished to acquire basic functional English and move quickly into the work force. Some participants faced the challenge of learning literacy skills for the first time. The following interviewee describes how in her opinion, it meant classes were highly repetitive and pitched at the lowest common denominator of skill.

Some people they coming, really, even ABCD they don't know. They don't know anything about [reading] and some people having a little bit [of reading] and …some people have a little bit higher. But in here they mix people having a little bit language with the people having none. And then they teaching you the little, and then you can't improve yourself. It's the same teaching every year, the same teaching …It makes it hard and now there's some people still today never learn. They just finish their hours, they never learn English.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Need for more tuition

While the provision of language tuition in the early period of settlement is critical it can also be the hardest time for adults to absorb complex information as they struggle with housing, financial, emotional and acculturation problems.

Without the opportunity to consolidate their language acquisition by moving into the workforce, participants were reporting that they were losing the English they had learned once their 510 hours were completed. Many of the participants requested the opportunity to attend more English classes, pointing out that with travel time, child care demands and illness, they were missing hours of their classes.

I felt I learnt a lot in the last two years but now I am not doing anything to help me remember what I learnt.
(Man, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

The problem that we have is English. The hours is not enough. If you have kids you have to get them out of bed, you have to shower them, you have to feed them, and make their lunch and get them to school. The time you get there it is already 3 or 4 hours. At the end of the semester, probably it says 50 hours but you have been there 20 hours. That's 30 hours you didn't study. They say 510 hours and when you just starting to understand English, is the time they cut it off.
(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

After exhausting their AMEP hours adult learners who are still not proficient may be offered the opportunity to participate in the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program, an extension language program funded not by DIAC but by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). In Tasmania these extended language programs were provided by TAFE but since the last round of tenders have been provided by another provider. The separation of language tuition services was confusing for research participants who commented on their unhappiness at moving from TAFE to other providers. Participants repeatedly stated that they felt they had access to facilities and equipment and teachers at TAFE that better facilitated their learning. The change in service, teachers and site also coincided with a reduction in hours available for tuition, adding to the participants' perception that it was a less useful service. Participants commented that the reduction in hours meant a loss in language proficiency if they were not able to back it up with employment or other engagement in English language environments.

When you finish your hours they take you to a different school and you only do 2 days a week and you got 5 days to speak your language so probably you going to forget by those two days. Better to get it 5 days a week.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

5.3 Citizenship intentions

DIAC assesses the take up rates for Australian citizenship as an important indicator of social participation on two grounds – the emotional commitment and sense of belonging that it represents, and the right that it accords to fully participate in democratic processes (DIMIA, 2003).

DIAC's research indicates that refugees (specifically people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian program) since 1999 have had poorer outcomes than skilled and family stream migrants against economic and health indicators. This is because of the likelihood that they had experienced considerable instability and disruption to their lives before coming to Australia. However, these new arrivals have the highest outcomes on social indicators such as levels of satisfaction with life in Australia and

citizenship intentions (DIMIA, 2003b). DIAC's data suggests that refugees arriving through the Humanitarian program are quick to apply for citizenship as soon as possible[7]. Certainly this was true of the cohort of research participants. Of the 35 research participants who indicated that they had been in Australia for more than 2 years, 24 were citizens. All interviewees who were not citizens indicated that they wished to acquire citizenship.

5.4 Education

> *It's really good. Our children are going to school. Even for me I never even used to know how to say the alphabet in my own language but here I am learning to write it in English. We are very grateful. It's good.*
> ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

Many of the research participants had children who were of school age, and some of the younger interviewees were studying at senior secondary level. The interviewees' children were enrolled in schools across the private and public school systems. All were asked to describe their experiences of Tasmanian schools including their relationships with teaching staff and school communities, memories of enrolment, their understanding of reporting systems and any experiences of dealing with concerns.

Very positive feedback was given by research participants on Tasmanian schools, both public and private. Participants reported they felt schools were welcoming and supportive, that very positive efforts were made to communicate with them about enrolment, general progress and reporting, and to support them and their children in the transitions between primary school, high school and college. They also felt that they were welcome to participate in school activities and many parents indicated that they had attended school events such as sports days or assemblies.

[7]Humanitarian program entrants were eligible to apply for citizenship after two years. Since 01/07/2007 this has been extended to 4 years.

Parents expressed no concerns about reporting systems, in spite of the current complex array of reporting systems in schools. Their comments indicated a high level of trust in the ESL teachers, class room teachers and school principals and it appeared great efforts had been made to keep parents informed about their children's progress, including making home visits with interpreters.

Some parents indicated that they had concerns about age-appropriate grades, preferring their children to be placed in grades based on their level of attainment, as their children were learning English and some had also had long periods without schooling. Some also thought Australian teachers were too friendly and casual with students and that that had the potential to erode respect between generations. When questioned however, parents almost unanimously reported that their children were happy in school and progressing with their learning.

Some of the parents reported that their children had experienced racist comments from other children at school but those parents who had approached schools about these issues were satisfied that the schools had dealt with the matter promptly and effectively.

> *It was okay but when we first arrived it was a bit difficult for [my daughter] some boys took her scarf. There was a lady in here [a settlement service volunteer] and she helped us. She talked to the Principal of the school about the matter and he talked to the boys. The school got two interpreters in when that problem happened.*
> ***(Woman, South-central Asia, Launceston)***

A small number of parents with children in independent schools had unresolved issues about incidents where their children had been disciplined at school and they felt their children had been treated more severely than other pupils. It was imperative to them their children be treated exactly the same as other children, particularly if their children were receiving fee relief. On questioning it emerged that in these instances interpreters had not been used to explain the disciplinary decisions to the parents even though the parents required them to communicate. This meant communications

depended on their children acting as interpreters, opening up room for misunderstandings.

Interviewees who had been in Australia 3 – 10 years reported good levels of educational attainment for their children, with a number progressing to post-secondary study including university.

However, focus groups with young people from African refugee communities indicated that a gap in support was in the transition from school to further education or training for youth who had arrived in Australia in the middle of their high school years and attended independent schools. Young people described feeling distressed by the gap between the courses being recommended to them and their aspirations, and overwhelmed by the enormity of the decisions they were making at the end of Year 12. They asked for more support to map out pathways to achieve their career goals.

5.5 Transport

A number of the people from new communities interviewed had been placed in housing which was not simply distant from the city centre and TAFE but also long distances from shopping centres. Large families and cuisines which require extensive quantities of bulky items (such as meat, flours, pulses, oil and vegetables) meant that the capacity to transport volumes of shopping was a priority. Access to transport is therefore not simply an issue about maintaining access to settlement services and language tuition but is also critical to the maintenance of households.

Public transport

> *A big issue for me is transport; to know how to catch a bus, where to catch a bus, where to take a bus. Some people catch the wrong buses*. ***(Man, Central Africa, Hobart)***

Learning public transport timetabling and routes were large hurdles for new entrants. Poor access to public transport because of irregular timetables or inaccessible routing was also an issue. Those refugees interviewed who had managed to get work were largely casual and working shifts. Their ability to get transport to and from work had become the deciding factor in whether they could accept work or not.

> *You can't find any transport on weekends. There is not any transport on weekends. The house is too far from everything. It's far away from the shopping. It's far away from people. We use taxis. It is too expensive to use taxis.* ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

> *My problem is I have a big family and I live far from the shops. So when I have to go to the shops to buy food I have to go to a shopping centre. So when I buy the food I don't have a car. That is a big issue for people who live far from the shop. Transport is a big issue. There aren't many buses and it is a long way and I am sick. It is very hard for me to walk so far.* ***(Man, Central Africa, Hobart)***

> *It is very difficult for us to even move. If the bus stops then our [language] program, everything stops, even to go to the supermarket we can't get chance to do. (Man, West Africa, Launceston)*

> *I have a Diploma in Aged Care and sometimes they ring and ask me to work and I can't work. Yesterday they called me to work but because I have to start at 5 [pm] and finish at 11 and from there to come home there is no bus at 11 o'clock Monday to Thursday. So I definitely couldn't do it because last Monday when I went there I nearly slept there.* ***(Woman, West Africa, Hobart)***

Drivers' licences

Getting their drivers' licences was a high priority for the research participants and was one of their key areas for recommendation for action. They had a clear view that a driver's licence was the underpinning requirement for work. The barriers to achieving this were significant: financing driving lessons and tests, getting access to a car and a driving instructor, being able to complete the 50 hours of tutored driving, and passing the driving test. The Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) provides interpreters to support driving test applicants, but many people were struggling to get to the point of being tested. A number of research participants

interviewed were on the waiting list for Top Gear, the driving tuition program run by the Migrant Resource Centre, while others were unable to get their names onto the books. The need for bilingual driving instructors was also pointed out.

> *Transport is probably one of the main problems. I do have license but I don't have a car. We were deciding to go to farms and ask if they could give us the job but we didn't have the transport and the first thing they were asking you was do you have a car, your own vehicle? We said no and they said we can't give you the job.*
> ***(Young woman, South-central Asia, Hobart)***

> *It is a problem for everybody because it really costs a lot of money because you need to get all those 50 hours to get your licence and if you don't have all that money it is difficult and it also makes things worse because you will not get any job. You need to have a car to get a job. This is very hard. And that has made life difficult for some of us because when we came here people really had a lot of problems and they had to do things part time and get to their studies and this made it really difficult.*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Launceston)***

The need to pay for driving instruction was repeatedly mentioned as a source of great financial difficulty – at $30 for a 50 minute lesson one participant had estimated that it would cost him $1800 in lessons with a driving school to qualify to sit his driving test. The participants were also aware that there was a high rate of failure among people from the new communities sitting the driving tests and pointed out the costs associated with repeatedly sitting the tests.

Women seemed to have greater difficulties getting licences than men. Of the 38 men interviewed, 30 (79%) indicated that they had licences (learners, provisional or full). Just over half of the licence holders (53%) had provisional or full licences. Of the 40 women interviewed, 19 had licences but of these licence holders only 4 (21%) had provisional or full licences.

5.6 Childcare

Childcare is provided free to new entrants while they are attending Adult Migrant English Program classes. Responsibility for the provision of childcare rests with the AMEP providers and contractually is required to be located so that it does not take more than 30 minutes to travel between the child care facility and the location of tuition or the client's home (DIMIA, 2003). Payment arrangements alter when people progress to different work or study programs, but financial assistance is still available through the Child Care Benefit, administered by the Family Assistance Office. Currently there is a shortage of childcare places across the community.

Of great concern to the families who were very new arrivals was their inability to get childcare which would enable them to attend their 510 hours of English language tuition at TAFE. Currently in Hobart the IHSS settlement service provider, Centacare, is providing some limited childminding in the mornings as an extra service to clients. A new entrant describes getting her young son to this service so that she can double back to the city and attend one hour of English classes.

> *I am learning English and I have not got childcare yet and so I am not studying well because I do just one hour and I then I go back to take care of him. I leave my child at Centacare and go to TAFE and then come back [to Centacare]. We live in Warrane and Centacare is New Town. I have to catch 5 buses for 1 hour of English and it is a lot of money for tickets and lots of my time. I leave my children at Centacare at 9am and come back here and sometimes I arrive at 10am and then I have to pick up the boy at 11.30am. I have no idea if someone is looking for better childcare for me.*
> ***(Woman, Central Africa, Hobart)***

Other new entrants were having similar problems.

> *It's very hard for me to travel and go and come back again but it's good for the boy. There is no real childcare at Centacare, just to help us, refugees who don't have childcare, so*

they open 9.00 to 11.30, they look after kids. I would prefer to have childcare in town so we can come together. When we came to start school here they told us they would look for childcare but it has been a long time, I don't know if they are still looking. I need help to find childcare. I can't learn English because I don't have enough time to study.
(Woman, Central Africa, Hobart)

DIAC services in this area, the Childcare Access Support Services, are focussed on inclusion and professional support for childcare services rather than on directly assisting refugee families to find childcare. However, assistance is clearly needed in this area as practical and linguistic difficulties in getting access to childcare was stopping some parents from attending their English classes.

This year, they take the [LLNP] education contract from TAFE and they give it to [charity]. [The charity] come and tell the migrants that they are not responsible to look for childcare for the migrants, now you have to look for childcare for yourself, or you go to a job network. And we don't know. I go around asking, but I don't know the location, I don't know the procedure when I go there they will say we can only take your son we will not take your daughter and now I and my wife cannot go to school because I have not childcare. I can't go to work or school, because I have to go to school to develop my English before looking for work.
(Man, West Africa, Launceston)

There was also considerable confusion among interviewees about what they were entitled to from the Family Assistance Office both in terms of hours and childcare subsidies. For example, interviewees reported being told that it was compulsory for young children to attend childcare, that it was forbidden for young children to attend childcare if there was a new baby in the family, that they would lose income from Centrelink if they did not place their infants in childcare, that childcare was paid for by Centrelink and that at the same time that they had debts with the childcare centres. At times these complexities were being dealt with by women who had not before had to deal with businesses or agencies on their families' behalf. A young woman's account of trying to deal with communications from Government offices about her new baby underlines how these stresses are faced in a difficult context of adjustment and disruption.

When I first arrived, because my sister proposed for me to get a visa so she was helping me right through and taking me to the offices Centacare and Centrelink and by that time I was pregnant and things were so difficult for me, the place was so cold. I was not used to the weather. And after I had my baby, these people, Family Assistance, they wrote me a letter concerning my children. They wanted them to go to childcare and my baby was so young and I couldn't let her go but they said if I didn't let her go they would deduct my income from Centrelink.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

5.7 Multicultural initiatives

Among the younger people interviewed there was a great generosity expressed towards Australian youth who were displaying race-based ignorance and aggression. Some of the young people had been involved in both structured and spontaneous initiatives in schools to get young people talking about their refugee and settlement experiences and had witnessed first hand the power of individual stories to open doors to understanding.

[The teacher] spoke to me and asked me how I feel and asked me to talk to the class and tell them what Africa is like because some of these kids don't know what life is like in Africa. So I spoke to the class and they were all touched. After I did that my teacher asked me would I like to talk to another class and I said yes. From there now I have a lot of friends because now they understand me and know where I came from. Like I said earlier if they don't try, they will never know.
(Young man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

There was also a desire on the part of participants for the Government to continue to take a leadership role in supporting and promoting multiculturalism in general and in funding specific anti-racism initiatives which the participants felt should not just be targeted at youth but also at their parents.

If you look at Australia it is a multicultural society. So if the government could emphasis ethnicity. Then that would be able to balance. They wouldn't see that we are black or we are white, or yellow. If the government could emphasise the strong relationship between us and we don't see ourselves like different people but we would see ourselves like people who live under one umbrella.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

5.8 Barriers to social participation

Social marginalisation because of race

Participants in Anglicare's research recounted many examples of social marginalisation that they had experienced on the basis of race. The experience of being discriminated against, harassed and physically and verbally abused is widespread among marginalised groups in Australian society. Research has demonstrated that this is experienced by people with disabilities (see for example Howe, 2000), people with mental health problems (eg, Cameron & Flanagan, 2005), homeless people (CHP, 2007), and gay, lesbian, trangender and bisexual people (eg Pitts et al, 2006). In the Tasmanian context, service providers report that harassment of people at living in homes managed by community service organisations because they are at risk of homelessness is commonplace (McLagan, pers. com). Just as unfortunately, marginalisation and victimisation also happens on the basis of race, colour and religious difference (Cunneen et al, 1997). The ability that people have to recover from the experience of being victimised is heavily influenced by their previous experiences. Traumatic histories of experiencing and/or witnessing extreme acts of violence have an impact on refugees' response to experiences in Australia

I been in problems [a war] back home. This why most African people they get sensitive sometimes and especially if Australian people make us sensitive it is very hard.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Recent policy changes have had an impact on the social inclusion of refugee communities. The Australian Government's commitment to refugee protection and resettlement is underpinned by a comprehensive service system which has its goal for refugees' social participation. However, it has been argued that Australia's response to refugee arrivals is inconsistent. Complex barriers to using this system have been constructed, based on refugee visa categories. The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA), the peak body for organisations working on refugee settlement, argues that a widespread perception that Government policy is focussed on border protection has made it harder for those within Government and the NGO sector to engage with the public on settlement issues and is undermining areas of strong achievement (RCOA, 2006). RCOA further argues that the impact of the border protection focus on public perceptions of refugees has been to create "a situation where most Australians believe that the majority of all refugees are "illegals" who come by boat. There is comparatively little awareness of the offshore program" (RCOA, 2006:16).

Verbal and physical assaults in public places

While all the refugees interviewed for Anglicare's research had met supportive and friendly Australians, many also had stories of being subjected to a range of hostile and discriminatory behaviours and even of assaults. Refugees from the Former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and the Middle East recounted occasional incidents of being called terrorists, "Bin Laden", having their hijabs pulled off, or being told to go back where they came from. Refugee youth in general, and people from Central, Western and Northern Africa in particular, appeared to be most frequently subjected to racist behaviours.

At its most extreme, a number of the interviewees had been verbally and physically assaulted by strangers, typically younger and male. While these incidents might not have been commonplace, they had the impact of frightening people across the communities. When asked where they felt most vulnerable to these assaults, participants nominated public streets, buses, bus stops, the footpaths outside public bars, and in their own homes.

Sometimes we do experience problems with transport – not that we have problems with the transport system but the people on there sometimes, some of them, when we are

getting the bus, they throw things at us or spit at us and some of them times throw things like bottle of soda so that makes it a bit, a tension. It is a bit scary.
(Man, Northern Africa, Launceston)

In the following account a woman whose husband was killed in a civil war in Africa describes being terrified by four men on a bus stop who surrounded her and poured a can of soft drink over her head while verbally abusing her.

Sometimes when you go to the bus station waiting for the bus to go home the people start to insult you when they see black people standing there. Sometimes they pour a drink on your head and sometimes they take [food] and when they see you are going, they will throw it on you. And it happened to me. And one of the representatives of the Catholic Church when he saw that these people were really making a lot of violence with me he rang the police and so the police came. And this has happened for no reason. [The people say] "Go back to your country. You black people – why do you come here?"
(Woman, Northern Africa, Launceston)

For young people racist abuse was a particularly big barrier to settlement in Tasmania.

We went shopping and we were outside putting the food in the car and they threw a bottle of water at us from their car and they shouted, "Take these people back to their own country". And we went to the country with the youth group from the [Settlement Grants Provider], and we were in a big bus and we were down in Huonville and Australian kids were walking around and they were all shouting, "Go back to your country" and, "What are you doing here black niggers?" I just felt so embarrassed and horrible and I can't talk and I don't even have any words to say and I can't say "shut up". I can't. I just feel so bad, so bad. When you've been living in your own country and people here are the same. For example in [Central Africa], they kept saying, "We have to kill you.' And you come here you think life is going to be cool and everybody says you have to go back. When are you going to feel you are at home?
(Young woman, Central Africa, Hobart)

The other day me and my cousin were walking and this guy threw an egg at us, and he said, "Go back to your country" and I was like! And it happened again because my sister was in hospital and we were walking down [to see her], even my Mum, and they said, "You black niggers, you go back to your country." And there were two cars [of them] and I was like, "What do we have to do?" and Mum was like, "You guys don't need to do anything".
(Young woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Some of the young men interviewed reported being confronted by hostile groups of young people in nightclubs with situations of aggression escalating, they felt, because of poor management by security guards. Below a student describes his experiences in a Hobart nightclub:

Some of them [nightclub patrons] they ask if you are working? Are you paying tax to the government? They ask, "Do you work?" I say, "No, I don't work." So they say, "You don't work," meaning you are living entirely on what I have paid to the government. "You are living on the taxpayers' money." It is very hard to be told that you are living on the taxpayers' money. Yet it happens sometimes because we know what the government thinks about welfare. This just happens when you are out. People have different views of refugees and new arrivals. I am just speaking about this so there is a way we can be able to help people in the future because it very much affects you.
(Young man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Older members of new communities expressed great concern about the effect incidents of abuse were having on their youth.

In Tasmania, the black people face problems that the white people do not face here. I'm talking about discrimination. You have reached a time when you people will have a problem that black people or white people fight or something happens. There are certain areas when you pass, it is mostly younger guys, when you walk in they shout at you, they call you certain names. This is

*not physical, but it is insulting violence. I think it has increased. One time I was riding a bicycle, I reached the traffic lights, when the lights came on I was going to go and this car drove past and said, "You f***ing black monkey what are you doing here?" I think this mostly is young guys. I don't know what they teach them in school to make them do that, because most of the young people do that. This keeps on increasing and increasing. And this is very bad because some of the younger guys, Africans, they fight because they will not be happy with that. But because we are older and know our responsibility we ignore them but youth they think "if someone insult me I will react".*
(Man, West Africa, Launceston)

Racially motivated vandalism

In a number of focus groups in Launceston and Hobart, participants discussed being subjected to attacks in their own homes which included rocks being thrown on their roofs, their letter boxes being destroyed, words painted on their houses, and having their windows broken by stones or bottles. For some people these were multiple incidents. For people coming from situations of life threatening persecution these attacks were very frightening. Women living alone with their children appeared to be particularly frightened by these assaults, with some clearly scared the harassment would escalate to violence.

One of the ladies who lived in Mowbray had her letterbox burnt and she is a single mother and she is saying if something happens to her; who will look after the kids?
(Woman, Northern Africa, Launceston)

I have had some problems in the area, some people come writing and painting things on my wall and recently a beer bottle was thrown through my window in the kitchen, so it has been a bit hard and the issue has been reported to the police but so far nothing has been done. The major problem is people coming around, I would call them attacks, people coming around painting, but we don't know who it is. The police have been trying to keep watch on that. And now I am not working because of that, because I have to keep watch on the family because of that. I have left work for some weeks now.
(Man, Northern Africa, Launceston)

Response by police

While police were clearly responding to calls for assistance, there was a widespread belief among the participants that these attacks on people and property were not taken seriously, particularly if the assailants were known to be juveniles. Participants reported being told to ignore the assaults or that there was nothing the police could do because of the youth of the attackers.

The problem with the police here is they don't take things seriously. A lady and a man were beaten badly and taken to the hospital and 6 months have passed and nothing has happened or been done about it. These problems are getting worse, especially since 2005 it is getting worse.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Launceston)

Criminal people came and broke the window. We called the police three times. After that they went to the Housing Department, we tell them what is going on but they said, "We can do nothing for you." The kids who come and break the window – when we ring the police, the police say we can't do anything, they are only 13 or 14 [years old]. The kids come every day. It does not happen to other houses in the neighbourhood. Just look at the colour of my skin and you will see why this is happening. When we went to the landlord and we told him what is going on he said why doesn't it happen to other houses, just to [African community] houses? So that clearly tells us. It has happened to other people in the [African] community.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Focus groups held for members of an African community in Hobart discussed attacks on young children by youths. The interviewees reported that youths responsible for these assaults were being prosecuted by police, but they reported feeling frustrated that a history of attacks on their homes by this same gang had, they felt, gone unaddressed until it escalated to violence.

They are going to prosecute somebody now, one of the kids. One of the kids is 16 years old – he cut my son with knives. My son is only 7 years old and the 16 year old cut my boy with knives so I am taking that to court now. How they find him, he was playing in the school yard after school, at 4 o'clock, and they just put him on the ground and got on top of him, two of them, and cut him with a knife. Now they forget about [vandalising] the houses and they entering into [attacking] the people living in the houses because they didn't get the response they want from people. People are angry and people are scared and the police is not helping very much. When we ring the police, every time they come around they say 'there is nothing we can do, they are kids, they are kids, they are kids, there is nothing we can do'.
(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Community ignorance about refugees

Less frightening but also upsetting for the refugees was what they reported to be a general ignorance in the community about refugees and the contexts from which they come. Participants from African communities reported being asked by Australians whether there were cities, houses, cars, schools, and even if there were animals in Africa. Some reported even being asked whether they had ever eaten bread before they arrived in Australia or if they had ever lived in a house with a floor before. The questions were based, they felt, on a media-fed assumption that everyone on the African continent lived in desperate poverty in near famine situations. It was a view that was ignorant of the complexity of modern Africa and dismissed the rich diversity of family, linguistic, cultural and historical connections they had left behind. The equally upsetting discourse which sometimes accompanied these assumptions was that the key motivator for them in coming to Australia was a simple pursuit of economic prosperity.

I would like them to know that to be a refugee is not a crime, to be a refugee doesn't mean that you are absolutely poor, or that you are primitive or illiterate. To be a refugee is somebody who needs help because they have been badly treated in their own country. If I was given the opportunity I would make sure that everyone understands that we are here, not because we can go to school, not because of Medicare, not because life is easy here, not because of that. We are here because we need peace. Because we are human beings with the right to live free of violence. It's hard when you walk down the street, knowing exactly what people think of you. You walk but you feel very little. Not all, but a portion of the people don't understand.
(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Even among those white Australians whose interest in new communities is supportive and friendly, there can be a casual racism, expressed in such things as a constant need for reassurance from new entrants that they know they are lucky to be here or throwaway remarks which imply that people of other races all look alike.

You are Australian and you have to forgive me, but there is an ignorance. You know me, I come to your church every Sunday, I see you every day, but once I change my hair you will come and say, "Which one are you?" "Which one are you!" You know me! It's been 4 years I've been doing something for your church and I help with the kids, I perform with a group that does dancing. They know me and they have known me for nearly four years but once I plait my hair or change it, they come and say "which one are you?". And then I just get mad. I can't understand.
(Young woman, Central Africa, Hobart)

Younger people interviewed discussed their developing sense of identity as African- or Afghan-Australians. They questioned when they would leave behind the identity of being a 'refugee' and simply be Australians – their discussion suggested that finding employment was essential to a sense of social inclusion and of providing a sense of conclusion to the settlement process and the beginning of normal life as an Australian citizen.

Some people after living here in Australia for more than two years they are granted citizenship and they become a citizens of Australia but with a lot of them, when they became citizens still the government does not

treat them like citizens of Australia. And when this happens, what happens is you feel like 'I am not part of this community because I'm not regarded for employment'. And people still ask, "Where are you from?" Imagine someone living here for 10 years and still you are not regarded for employment and still people are asking where do you come from? (Young man, Central Africa, Hobart)

Work places

Participants also reported experiencing discriminatory and racist comments in work environments in which they should be protected by anti-discrimination legislation. Interviewees reported incidents of this occurring both in paid employment and when on work placements. At times this was named directly as a barrier to employment, at others as a regular part of workplace banter. Some participants reported finding this kind of 'matey' mockery particularly upsetting.

"Do you have schools in your country?" This sort of question makes me feel very depressed. This is a situation at work that I am talking about. These people are talking like that, they don't know that I already have two diplomas and I am Australian-educated. And I know that is not allowed, you cannot attack a fellow employee and you cannot interrupt people. [But] the way they do it is with mockery. They were mocking me. "You are from a primitive country; you are very poor", comparing Tasmania's bread with what I would have eaten.
(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

They always bring race into it. They think it's funny. They don't know that it's really hard because you are not in your country, you don't belong to that country any more, you are here and you want to be accepted. Because I am a citizen, I pay my tax like you pay your tax so it's not a good thing to call names.
(Man, South-central Asia, Launceston)

Racism and trauma

While some refugees showed enormous resilience in dealing with harassment and discrimination, the affect on others was devastating. For some the feeling of threat made memories of past traumas resurface, creating an overwhelming sense of dread and hopelessness. Reflecting on the time she was attacked at the bus stop, a woman said:

When the people were attacking me, that is the time when I started feeling bad and I thought, "Oh if that is the situation here in Launceston it is better to move from here." Because there were men, there were about 4 people and they attack me and insult me and do all kinds of things to me. It really affected me because where I came from is from the war zone and I thought maybe that when I am in Australia I am safe from all these problems. But if these people start making violence and insulting it is better to go back and die there than come here because it will recall what has happened back home and it gives more trauma in my mind and I don't feel really happy and I don't even feel secure. I want to cry. I am unhappy.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Launceston)

One day I was in the car and 2 young girls started insulting me. Back home that is not allowed to happen – a young person is not allowed to insult someone who is older than them. It makes you feel insecure, which means still it is a struggle here though we have left the war, still there is another war going on here between the black people and the Australians. So what can we do? It is better to go back and die there.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Launceston)

For me the most important thing is to live in peace together without creating these differences between white and black which I always experience. If you go here, somebody throws things at you and somebody insult you, and everywhere you feel like you are hated and you are not part of the society. So at the end I begin to think "have I been brought here to be killed or what?" Because everywhere you go to you feel you are being harassed and no action is being done.
(Man, Northern Africa, Launceston)

Isolation: regional settlement difficulties

The settlement difficulties associated with social and geographic isolation, even in metropolitan Hobart, are evident from the narratives of the research participants. Those people from small communities who face the further challenge of being settled outside metropolitan areas face significant problems with social and economic isolation. This has a substantial impact on the new arrivals, particularly those from new and emerging communities.

Psychologically, settling in regional areas can be difficult. Some new arrivals were coming from sprawling Asian and middle eastern cities in countries of first asylum: the sight of seemingly empty chilly countryside, and cities that looked like villages increased their sense of vulnerability – a feeling of having fled to the very edge of the world.

> *They took us to the house. I was waiting to see the skyscraper, big towers, you know, city. We drove, it was night, it was dark, on the right hand side farm and trees, and left hand side the same. I thought maybe it's the airport area, that is the reason. Then we got into this city and I saw some houses and I thought, what is this place? I couldn't see any building more than 2 or 3 levels.*
> ***(Man, South-central Asia, Launceston)***

The geographical isolation is compounded by social isolation. Members of particularly small communities identified the smallness of their cultural and language groups as a significant problem for them in settling in Tasmania. The isolation experienced by people when there is no-one, or only one or two other families from their community, is extreme. These particular interviewees, who had been in Tasmania for periods of 2 to 4 years, felt that they had largely made the adjustment to life in Tasmania, however they felt that a policy of settling new arrivals in small groups and in regional centres was ill-advised. They described long periods of depression and loneliness.

The following interviewee describes the mental impact of being the first family from their language and cultural group to settle in Hobart. The nearest speaker of their language that they were aware of was in Sydney.

> *It was hard to feel at home. It was hard for me because nobody else speaks my language. We were the first family from [my country] so no-one else speaks our language and we don't speak English. And just not being able to speak English to communicate with my friends – African friends or Australian friends – just made me feel lost and lonely all the time until I am able to speak English. Since I have learnt to speak English I have started to feel like it's home. Of course I still feel homesick all the time, every day, but I started getting used to people and the place. We did know one person on the mainland who speaks our language – because there's not a lot of people from my country in Australia - so all communication is broken unless you call overseas, then you can speak to someone who speaks your language. So we didn't know where to go. There is no one here. We are here for a reason but we don't know the reason. We didn't choose to come to Tasmania but we have to get used to it. We don't have a choice.*
> ***(Young woman, Central Africa, Hobart)***

Some small communities have been characterised by a constant exit of families to mainland cities.

> *The Australian embassy worker said we will send you somewhere where there are enough people from your community. But when I came here there were only 3 or 4 families, not many. When they want to send a refugee, don't send them somewhere there is small community of those people. At least send them somewhere, because for the first, at the beginning it makes them really depressed, really depressed.*
> ***(Man, South-central Asia, Launceston)***

> *If you don't have a big community here to contact each other, it is difficult. Everybody is talking with each other, the support is absent, because when just one family, two family live in Launceston it makes stresses, thinking, we not helping each other. They quickly move to the other city.*
> ***(Man, South-central Asia, Launceston)***

It is DIAC policy to direct Humanitarian Program entrants who do not have social links in Australia to locations which it believes to have the capacity to meet their needs. In 2004-05 these 'unlinked Refugees' were settled in the Greater Hobart area and in Launceston. Two new arrivals from a Middle Eastern country discussed their experience of arriving in Launceston where they had no links to any cultural, linguistic or faith-based group. They concluded that the policy of sending them to a regional area forced a double settlement hurdle on them, as it forced them to move after the intensive support period had expired, to relocate to a centre nearer to infrastructure such as educational, transport and work opportunities. Such a double settlement process exhausted them emotionally and financially.

> *We were sent to [regional area] so it was a little bit hard, we were already behind. So we did everything twice. It was really hard for us. That is why we said we have to move to Launceston and that is where the problem starts because we were doing things twice. I think it would have been good if, when the first people arrive, they put them in a city where they can find jobs. And where we were there were no other [people from our country] around to talk to. It was a nightmare. Even in Launceston it is hard to get work but I don't want to go to Melbourne and start all over again because we had a really hard time. We would have to spend another 2 years on a whole new beginning – that would be really hard.*
> ***(Man, South-central Asia, Launceston)***

6. Refugees' experiences of settling in Tasmania: economic participation and wellbeing

This section analyses the data against those indicators of settlement broadly grouped as indicators of economic participation and wellbeing. These indicators include labour force participation, employment details and occupational status (including regaining the level of occupational status enjoyed prior to becoming refugees and usage of highest qualification). Level and source of income are also indicators of financial independence. Other indicators of economic participation and wellbeing are housing details, including tenure type, and accessibility and affordability.

6.1 Employment

> *It's hard to remember everything about coming here and settling here. Now I have a job and some money coming in and I am happy so I am not thinking about the past. Now I am alright.*
> ***(Man, Southern Europe, Burnie)***

Refugees may take long periods to establish themselves in the labour market. This is due to the dramatic emotional, psychological and at times physical consequences of their pre-arrival experiences. Support to assist them to find employment is arguably one of Australia's humanitarian responsibilities to refugees; certainly economic research supports the conclusion that the employment of refugees, like that of migrants generally, supports not just individual economic wellbeing but broader economic growth. However, in spite of this, national labour force data suggests that employment outcomes for refugees in the first phases of settlement have deteriorated, with proportionally less new arrivals in employment after six and eighteen months than was found in the early 1990s (National Institute of Labour Studies data quoted in DIMIA, 2003; 67).

These differences in labour market outcomes have been largely attributed to the fact that the more recent arrivals have experienced greater disruption and longer periods of instability than previous arrivals (DIMIA, 2003). However,

a recent review of refugees' experience of the labour market has suggested that a lack of appropriate post-arrival support could also be a contributing factor (Kyle et al, 2004).

DIAC's framework for good economic settlement outcomes points out that while gaining employment is important, other key aspects of employment are the nature and status of employment. Clearly very successful settlement outcomes are where new arrivals achieve an equivalent, or improved occupational status to that which they enjoyed prior to their refugee experience, as this indicates that they are contributing to the labour force to their full potential.

Labour force participation varies greatly over time and according to gender. Anglicare's research included a substantial number of interviewees from the newest communities who were engaged in learning English or were busy with childcare responsibilities. However, the work history details collected for this project suggest a substantial loss of opportunity for Tasmania. Forty-five of Anglicare's research participants reported histories of paid employment prior to entering Australia. Their working histories were diverse, ranging from occupations which required post-secondary education, such as accountancy, teaching, and nursing, to business experience and skilled blue collar work such as truck driving, welding, bricklaying and construction work. In spite of this depth of work experience, of the 78 people interviewed for this project only 23 were working. The majority of these were in casual and impermanent positions and they indicated a strong preference for more regular and permanent work. Only eight of the 78 people interviewed were supporting themselves through earned income. The men and women who had gained employment were mainly engaged in farm, factory and cleaning work although four interviewees from new African communities had completed training as support workers and were working in disability or aged care services. These were all casual positions.

Four of the refugees had returned to the occupations they had held prior to becoming refugees or to occupations of equivalent status. These participants had all been in Tasmania for 4 – 9 years and all had undertaken the requisite study to satisfy Australian requirements. For three of these, that had required the enormous achievement of completing tertiary studies in a foreign language.

Anglicare's research participants identified that the specific issues for them in job-searching were poor networks, disrupted education, lack of recognised qualifications, a lack of success in the Job Network system, discrimination against them as 'different' job seekers and the erosion of their self-confidence caused by their failure to find work.

Unemployment

The experience of the majority of Anglicare's research participants in the Tasmanian labour market had been very difficult. Many of the people interviewed were actively looking for work, even those who were full-time University students or who were still engaged in their 510 hours of English language lessons. The overwhelming majority of interviewees had experienced lengthy periods of unemployment.

> *It is always the same. You don't know – where are you going to get a job? You don't know is it just with you or with other people? Because I see that other people, they get a job very easily. And I just wonder what is wrong with me? I have applied for volunteer work and they don't even give me the volunteer work. I've applied for many, many jobs, even being a dishwasher, cleaning the kitchen, working in Target, Coles and Myers but I get none of them. I just don't feel that one day I will have a job.*
> ***(Young woman, South-central Asia, Hobart)***

> *I applied for a job at a supermarket and after a year there was no response. I can read and write and I have been here for a year and if they give me an address I can find it but we can't even get a job delivering catalogues.*
> ***(Man, West Africa, Launceston)***

The majority of the refugees interviewed expressed high levels of motivation to join work, however a number of the participants were long-term unemployed, that is, had been unemployed

for more than 2 years. The relationship between employment and health and wellbeing was highlighted in their narratives as they described a frustrating and confidence destroying round of applying for jobs and facing repeated rejection. Many also pointed out that the enforced idleness of unemployment was bad for them mentally, causing stress and depression.

Even members of communities who had been settled in Tasmania for 3 to 5 years were still having difficulty making the transition into full-time or permanent part-time work.

> *The most important thing that would help us settle in Tasmania was a full time job because it is more security – less money but more security. When you are full time you get money and you get paid holidays and sick pay as well but when you are part time or casual they don't pay you any of that. I just want the security of a full time job.*
> ***(Man, Southern Europe, Burnie)***

> *There have been lots of problems finding work. I still have problems finding work. There is a problem here finding even part time jobs; there is often only seasonal work on farms. I have a truck licence and a forklift licence but it's even hard to find work doing that here sometimes.*
> ***(Man, Southern Europe, Burnie)***

> *I would also like to talk about employment. All of us here are members of our community and so far we have a very bad record of people living here. People are leaving for the mainland because of employment. Some of the people have been here for 5 years and they are crying for work but they can't get work.*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

The Job Network

Anglicare's research found widespread dissatisfaction with, and lack of confidence in, the Job Network providers. Refugees reported that despite a high level of job search requirements placed on them by Centrelink, little or no employment opportunities were generated through their Job Network providers. When new entrants register for the Job Network they undergo a Job Capacity Assessment. Many are identified as requiring intensive support customised assistance which qualifies them for intensive one-to-one assistance. In spite of this a number of interviewees reported going for periods for as long as 2 years without getting a single job interview which created a low level of confidence in the Job Network.

> *Most of them [Job Network providers], if you go to them they put it in their record that they are working and at the end of the fortnight they get their pay. Because you go there, you explain your problem, you are looking for a job, they interview you, it's like you are the job for them. They are not giving you a job but they are getting paid. It is just a formality. If you don't go there they will tell Centrelink your pay must be cut. You go there they give you 15 minutes they talk. They say "write the application", you write, then you get a letter telling you that you are not successful. I don't think most of these applications have a question asking you your level of education. I think they look at us and think we are not educated.*
> ***(Man, West Africa, Launceston)***

Research participants were bewildered by the bureaucratic requirements involved in job seeking in Australia and pointed out that an emphasis on producing resumes was not useful for people who did not have Australian qualifications or experience. They also reported that some providers made no provision for their lack of computer skills when referring them to internet based advertisements.

> *Since I entered [Tasmania] I have looked for a job on a farm. They said I had to go and register with [Job Network Provider]. The amount of meeting I had with them! Every two weeks I have to go I have to make sure whether I am working or not working. And when I go and explain my problem they do nothing. Why I go there I don't know. I say I am looking for a job, where I go? I want to work! But now Centrelink says if you don't go to work we will cut your money. But when I go to look for work they say go and check on the internet. I don't know how to use*

computer. Many migrants here they don't know how to use computer but they always say if you want a job look on the internet. Even to send email I don't know how.
(Man, West Africa, Launceston)

Interviewees also believed that the Job Network providers themselves held discriminatory views about the capacity of people from refugee communities. The following interviewee registered with a Job Network provider after graduating from the University of Tasmania with an Honours degree in a vocationally-focused degree and a place on the Dean's Roll of Excellence.

I knew a couple of [fellow graduates] who went [to the Job Network provider] after I did and we were looking for the same kinds of jobs and after one week they give them a job in [industry] and I had no idea, they didn't mention anything to me and I was before the [other graduates] in registering. After that I got really angry I said to them, "Look what has happened? That guy, we finished together, I was before him and he got the job and I am still here." And they said, "Oh, ok." They got the newspaper – and they said, "There were jobs harvesting potatoes." I got a degree for God's sake, they are sending me potato harvesting! And even if it was full time I wouldn't care, but it was only casual work so it's not going to do me any good.
(Man, South-central Asia, Launceston)

Qualifications

Two issues around qualifications emerged from the focus groups and interviews: the formal qualifications required to get even low skilled work in Tasmania and the failure of Australian employers to recognise overseas qualifications.

The formal qualifications required to get even low skilled work were a significant barrier to work for the research participants and a source of great frustration, particularly in the context of pressure from Centrelink to find work. Interviewees reported being told that they were required to achieve IELTS Level 5[8] in English plus certification in work place skills in order to get low skilled manual work as kitchen hands or cleaners.

Since I came in November, God bless me, I haven't had a job. There was one job but I didn't have the criteria to go and do the job. It was about 80km from here. I didn't have a car but I said I will go stay there but they said you are not qualified, you can't speak good English, you have to go back to school. That is some of the sad information. That was to do farm work.
(Man, West Africa, Launceston)

Research participants also reported that a further frustration was having completed courses through TAFE or Job Networks that did not lead to employment or at best only generated casual work. Research participants cited completed courses in the areas of aged care, mental health and disability support work, construction skills, cleaning, and first aid. Some had passed courses but had been re-enrolled to do them again. The following research participant reported that she had done 5 courses ranging from first aid through cleaning to a number of courses in support skills for the community services sector. Some of these courses had been organised through TAFE, some through her Job Network provider and some she had enrolled for having seen them advertised by Registered Training Organisations.

I get the certificates but I don't get interviews for any jobs. I need work because sitting, doing nothing, is no good. You know something, something is really disappointing. One thing here [in Tasmania]; if you African you never find job. Because most [of] the people, you doing the same courses with them, and then they just take them [the jobs] and then they leave you there, behind.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

At the same time recognition of their work skills was a big issue for the refugees. Research participants reported facing the problem of not having the documentation to demonstrate their skills levels, or being required to retrain to acquire Australian qualifications in their skills areas.

[8]IELTS is the International English Language Testing System. It is the preferred test of English for students intending to study in Australia. IELTS Level 5 is a "Modest User", ie, "has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field."

When I came here I had to start afresh, which was quite hard. My idea was that the moment when I arrived in Australia we would straight away start working and my experience was contrary to my idea. So that was the thing that led me to be stressed so much. Because I did my Diploma in Education for Secondary [schools] in [Africa] but when I arrived here it was quite difficult. I had to go for Teacher's Aide but I couldn't finish because at the time I was having a baby. I made up my mind to go back to school this year. I went and did Certificate 3 in Aged Care. With that certificate I went for interviews but I couldn't get the job.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

While they recognised that losing their documentation in flight meant that they would be required to re-demonstrate their skills, there was a strong feeling that no recognition of prior learning or experience was afforded to them and that this was discriminatory. For example, even people with work histories as professional truck drivers were required to have a log of 50 hours supervised driving practice before being allowed to sit a driving test. This was queried by one of the research participants, who asked why they were not allowed to sit the test and be offered the chance to demonstrate competency as a first rather than last step as is offered to other holders of international licences – those who have documentation.

It seems that the Government won't recognize any trade that you have had in Africa, even if you have a certificate when you come here. For example, I am a truck driver in Africa. If the government would recognize that when I come, then all they would need to do is give me a truck and I will do the test. If I pass the test you give me a licence. I did not bring my licence with me from my country, because where we came from, there is not one who would even have their school certificate to bring. Because when they [the rebels] attack you leave your children, you leave your wife and you go. You have to run fast to save your life. You come without documents. You have to start fresh. It delays all things.
(Man, West Africa, Launceston)

Out there you can see places really need people to come and work. And there will be people who come [to Australia] with skills and experiences but they tell us that is no good, that is not an Australian paper you have to go back and get an Australian paper. Your experience doesn't count – it's nothing, it doesn't count if it's not Australian.
(Man, West Africa, Hobart)

Mentoring/placements

Nationally, group projects which provide mentoring or work placement experience are being promoted as useful opportunities for new entrants to get an introduction to Australian workplaces and useful community networks (Carr, J; 2004; RCOA, 2005). These projects offer opportunities to promote the benefits of training and gaining employment, or exposure to workplace culture and workplace norms and can lead to positive employment outcomes. Research suggests that these programs work best for humanitarian and refugee entrants when they are specifically targeted to their needs; and that when effectively planned and implemented, they can feature outcomes that compare favourably to programs run by government agencies and government sponsored service providers (RCOA, 2005). However, the findings of this research suggest that work placement programs can themselves become a source of frustration to new arrivals if they are not providing a pathway to employment to a significant enough proportion of participants.

You may be given a chance to do a work placement thinking that on completion you will be employed. And then what happens many times with myself and with a number of people they will get trained and they are not given the job, so what's the point of training someone in that area and they are not getting the job? That's one of the problems.
(Young man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

It is really hard for some people because they got trained and they believed they would get that job and because they don't have the experience or because they lack the language then they cannot get a job.
(Young man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Entry into the labour force

Many of the refugees felt that the emphasis on delaying employment until a certain level of English proficiency was reached did not help them to gain language proficiency, and delayed them in settling by prolonging their inability to help family. Many had had experience of being displaced persons in other countries and reported that they had quickly acquired the language of those countries through being in work environments. There was a desire expressed for part-time work opportunities which would allow continued enrolment in English language courses or other courses of study but would also relieve the pressure they felt to generate income and support their families. Some of the interviewees who were in work were finding employers unsupportive of their requests to go to part-time work, others reported that they felt pressure to drop studies altogether and try to look for full-time work – an entry into the labour market which they were aware might doom them to a lifetime of low paid and insecure work. The interviewees were also aware of members of their community nationally who were faring better in labour markets in other states – increasing pressure on them to move interstate.

> *It looks like the most common jobs here we can get here is at [the abbatoir]. And there they have a lot of problems with the blacks. I worked for them for a long time and I asked them to work for 3 days so I can continue with my school for 2 days a week and they said no because they wanted me to work full time. So we need a [part-time] job for us to do because if we stay around for maybe 3 years your friends are [in Melbourne], they are working and at the same time they are going to school. There is a difference between you and someone living somewhere else. You have the same papers but he has more money than you.*
> ***(Man, West Africa, Launceston)***

> *Settling was a bit hard because when you come over here you have a lot of dreams and then when you get here your dreams narrow because you financially can't make your dream happen. You want to get a job, at least part-time, but you can't get that here. It is hard to settle as a single, very, very hard because if you go full time student you go on Austudy. And then if you have some people back home you want to support them but you can't do that. Because you can't even get a kitchen hand job doing washing at night during the time you can sacrifice. That is why many of my friends have moved from here to the mainland to get work, and get flexible work, so they can study.*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

Lack of networks

A number of the research participants had observed that personal and community networks were more critical to getting work in Tasmania than registration with a Job Network provider. While this is true for all job-seekers, research has indicated that this is a particular barrier for refugees, addressed in part by the degree to which their ethnic community is already established (Waxman, 1998; 763). In a number of focus groups the research participants argued for the need for a specialist service provider.

> *[Tasmanian employers] seem to feel we are not competent enough or we can't speak the English enough to communicate with customers or people in a workplace, they feel like we are not capable enough to speak English and other stuff. There are a lot of people here - people from our country - who were working in big places; we have banks, we have hospitals. We have people who used to do this kind of work but because we have war they had to leave. But they can do this work; if you put in the effort they can really do it. But that is the problem in Tasmania – [employers] failing to realize the fact that we can work.*
> ***(Man, West Africa, Launceston)***

> *I did a course in construction trying to get a construction job. When it was finished we were told by [Job Network Provider] now we are finished so you have to look for a job for yourself. We are migrant to look for a job! Nobody knows me! Here to look for a job is introduction, recommendation – not only in Tasmania, in a lot of places. So they are there to represent us to various companies,*

but they are asking me to look for a job by myself. Since then I have been apply, apply, apply. I decide ok, I will go back to college and they sent me to TAFE to do two more courses and I studied construction for another 8 weeks to get Certificate 1 and then I went back to college and I've been doing some work experience with a big company– all that I have added to my resume but up until now they have not found me a job. They are trying to tell me is there are no jobs available and no jobs in the building industry.
(Man, West Africa, Hobart)

Employers' discrimination against difference

The research participants reported some difficulties in job seeking which they thought were particular to Tasmania. People who conversed fluently with the researchers in English reported being told by potential employers that their accented English was a problem and a barrier to employment. Many of them have friends and family living in cities on the mainland who had been successful in finding employment even when they had little English. This issue was not confined to the people from countries whose official national language is English, but was certainly felt keenly by them.

One day when I went to the mainland I was like what is wrong with Tasmania? I have got friends on the mainland who, well I can speak better English then them, and they work in very good places, they work in restaurants, they deal with customers. They are my African brothers but they have not gone to university. On the mainland people can get jobs who can't speak English at all: the Egyptians, the Koreans, the Chinese. This is my resume. I went to school, I did everything. [my country] was colonized by the British and the language we speak most is English. It is just that our accent is different – that's it. I don't know why they find it very difficult.
(Man, West Africa, Launceston)

Certainly it appears that some employers will discriminate against job applicants on the basis of race or religion.

Some places, like coffee shops or these places they say, "Because you wear a headscarf it is difficult for you to work in here".
(Woman, South-central Asia, Launceston)

When I was 16 I applied for [a job at] KFC with my [school] friends. They were looking for about six people and there we were, six of us who applied for that job. We were six and they need six. And five of them get jobs. And I went there and I said, "Why is that, why didn't I get a job when all the rest got jobs?" And the lady said, "Your background." And I said, "What's wrong with my background? If my English is good, I can talk to the customers." She said "Sorry darling. I couldn't do that." I said, "Alright, it's alright I can deal with it." My five friends who got the jobs were white girls.
(Young woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Employment in the public service

A number of research participants called for positive discrimination by Government and community service employers to support the entry of African refugees into the workplace. For some interviewees, employment by Government was strongly linked to their commitment to being Australian citizens – they felt that such work was service to the community and that the representation of all community groups within that workforce was both a right and responsibility of citizenship. There was a particular call for such workplaces to employ African community members in front office positions where they would encourage access by members of the new communities and also act as a human image of hope to job seekers.

Some of us have citizenship of Australia. There should be some Africans in government workforce, helping the government, serving this country. There are a whole lot of jobs which we could do. People say there are not jobs in Tasmania but that's not true, there are jobs, there are a whole lot of jobs.
(Young man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Forcing interstate migration

Research participants also reported that unemployment remained a driver forcing many members of their communities out of

Tasmania and to the mainland in search of work. Participation in education was keeping some people in Tasmania, but they viewed this as short-term and discussed joining their communities in mainland capitals.

> *The Tasmanian Government must realize that these people can make a contribution to the development of the Tasmanian economy – if they have to look for apprentices they should provide employment. And now because the government doesn't recognize that, what is happening, most of those families who came here move to the mainland because they don't have anything to do here. So they are thinking, "Oh I should go to the mainland because I may get a job, and then I can help my family". For how long can these people live on Centrelink benefits? These are active people and they wish to stay. And all these active young people are going to the mainland.*
> ***(Young man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

6.2 Level and source of income

The level and source of income of refugee arrivals is deemed to be an important measure of settlement as it is indicative of the financial independence they have reached in Australia (DIMIA, 2003). The majority of the research participants in this project were dependent on Centrelink benefits although some had made the transition to earned income.

Centrelink income

> *When you finish the [AMEP] hours and you*
>
> *don't really understand English well enough to get a job then Centrelink says you have to get a job and they really pushing you to get a job and they send you heaps of letters. Then they give you more [English tuition - LLNP] hours and you start from zero again and you keep going like that so you getting nowhere.*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

> *When you get here you think the welfare system is a good one but it is not necessarily support.*
> ***(Young man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

For the new entrants, none of whom came from countries with comprehensive social security systems, the Australian income support system was a highly regarded source of support in the early period of settlement for which many expressed great gratitude. It was observable that over time the attitude of refugees towards the income support system changed; interviewees who had been in the country for longer than six months tended to have developed a more ambiguous attitude towards 'Centrelink'. Their unwilling dependence on Centrelink benefits made them aware of the problems and poverty traps that exist within the Australian system. Nevertheless, even with this perspective numerous interviewees said that receiving income support payments in their first weeks after arrival, when they felt exhausted, disorientated and overwhelmed was one of the most critical supports that they received in the settlement process.

However, from the outset, dealing with Centrelink was a source of great concern to the people interviewed as there was a sense of vulnerability about how long, and under what conditions, the Government would continue to give financial support. This was in spite of reassurances of ongoing Government support from workers and volunteers.

> *I got Centrelink but still I was scared. Money for free – I don't believe it! I think, I got it but maybe next week I not get it. I don't know. After about six months I start to believe it would keep coming. With a little bit of English and a little bit of reading I think 'oh and still money will come in'. When we first arrived here they explain to us about Centrelink. Actually we go on the second day to Centrelink and they explain to us but still our bodies are shaking because we have just arrived and we don't know anything but we must go.*
> ***(Woman, Southern Europe, Burnie)***

Centrelink is one of the most complex systems that faces the new arrivals and it was one which many reported finding threatening. On arrival Humanitarian entrants are given a three month exemption from Mutual Obligation requirements with its Activity and Administrative

Test obligations and their accompanying fines for non-compliance. This exemption can be extended while they are completing the Adult Migrant English Program and service providers report that generally Centrelink discourages new entrants from looking for work during this early stage. However, if new entrants register as looking for work, even while students of the AMEP, they will come under the Mutual Obligation system. Interviewees repeatedly reported they had received correspondence telling them they would lose income if they did not engage in certain activities or fulfil certain tasks, creating a level of anxiety about dealing with the system.

For some, coming from a lifetime of self-reliance, the mental adjustment required was not simply to receive money from the Government but also to accept the behavioural management systems imposed upon them by Government. They found themselves compelled to attend meetings or workshops, stay in touch with Job Network providers which they thought gave them no assistance to find work, provide detailed personal information, fill in endless forms, and accept fines for non-compliance with this. The obligation to engage in activity which they saw as largely unfruitful was particularly trying when they could not find a pathway out of this system and into autonomy through employment. Pressure to be active when the labour market forced them to be inert was causing high levels of stress.

> *I must be grateful to Centrelink for the help I got when I came. But the issues of controlling people: saying you can do this, you can do this, we can't give you this. It is so frustrating. The way they say 'I need this before I can get this' and telling you need to fill in a form before you can get a payment. 'If you don't do this, you cannot get this.' You can be so eager to go and get work but you don't even know the environment and you also don't know how to go about getting a job. You need a lot more information and you need time on the ground to learn how things work.*
> ***(Man, West Africa, Hobart)***

> *When I first arrived I struggled to find myself a job. I struggled, walking around handing my Resume from [JPET provider] and I gave my resume to MacDonalds. The first 3 days I worked they paid me one day $10. And I said 'oh yes, now I have started my good life here in Tassie'. And then for a couple of months and they didn't call me for work. So I went to Centrelink and told them I lost my job and Centrelink wrote me a letter saying if you don't accept our conditions we will stop your allowance. This left me feeling really bad because I am not working. They said you have 2 choices [to work or not to work] and you take one [not to work] from the day you come to us and say that you not working. So I make up my mind to leave [Tasmania]. This is something the youth here are finding; it [is] difficult to get work.*
> ***(Young man, West Africa, Hobart)***

A number of them reported having Activity Test (Mutual Obligation) requirements placed on them which they struggled to meet due to language and educational barriers.

> *I worked as a teacher in [north Africa] for 18 years. When I got here I didn't want to go to TAFE, I wanted to get a job straight away because I don't like Centrelink. I don't like being pushed a lot. So I went there and said I want to do the [teacher] training and AMEP said TAFE tell them I have to study English first. And when I do my [AMEP] hours they tell me [now] you have to do the [teacher] training. And when I go to the [teacher] training they tell me you don't have enough English, go back [to AMEP]. I went back and forth, back and forth, and Centrelink cut off my payment. My [AMEP] hours are finished now and I don't get a chance to go to school again.*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

Dealing with errors by Centrelink which had resulted in a loss of their income was also extremely difficult for the refugees who had trouble advocating for themselves within the system. The following interviewee is a widow who has had primary level education, has never worked outside the home and cannot speak English. Since her youngest child turned 16, she has been transferred from a parenting pension to Newstart Allowance (the dole) with the expectation that she find work. Since this transfer there have been regular errors with her payment.

It is hard to talk to people if I got to go to Centrelink, if there is a letter or something or if I talk to them. Centrelink doesn't get an interpreter but every 2 weeks there is a letter I must fill in. If I don't fill in the letter or if I don't get the letter they don't give me the money. They don't get an interpreter to help me fill in the form. It is very difficult. I have to get one of my daughters to help me. When I go to the bank to check my account to see if they pay the money in my account I see that the money is not in there and I might need to use the money on that day. So I have to go to Centrelink to talk to them and in 2 days they will pay, so it is very hard. Once my daughter became 16 years old I got this problem very much. Before this it was ok but once she turns 16 I have this problem. I have had this problem for about 1 year; it happens every fortnight, every month, very often. Centrelink has not fixed this.
(Woman, South-central Asia, Launceston)

Level of income

Research participants were asked to indicate their main source of income. Of the 75 people who responded to this question, 70 (93%) indicated that they were dependent on Centrelink benefits and allowances as their main source of income. These benefits were, in order of prevalence, Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payments (Partnered and Single) and Austudy.

The experiences of the refugees interviewed for this research confirmed those of other low income Tasmanians – in spite of these people's formidable survival skills, they reported finding it extremely difficult to live on the incomes they receive from Centrelink. Some households were under greater financial pressure because they were sending money to relatives in refugee camps; others had outstanding debts for the cost of their air tickets to Australia.

It is really difficult staying here only depending on Centrelink. All our family members are in the camps and it is our responsibility to take care of them, so what we receive from Centrelink and the government, paying rent, paying our bills, going to school, what remains is what we send. So it is like the money comes and goes. It is not enough money. If you are working it is much better. For me I have decided to leave this state because there is no job.
(Man, West Africa, Launceston)

I don't think that the money the government gives them through Centrelink is helping; this money is not helping at all. It is not enough. This is true for other people, and it is very hard for me. Out of the money that I get I need to do other things – there are other things to buy. I get $340 a fortnight. There are bills to pay, electricity, house rent and when you look at these things you find that you are only left with maybe $20 for the fortnight. It is not enough money. These are some of the things that are really hard. This is hard for all people but for we people who are students, because we need to give all our efforts to learn and to take the opportunities that we have not got in our country. If we are looking for work all the time, for me it is not good.
(Young man, Northern Africa, Hobart)

The budgetary items most commonly cited as causing financial difficulties were food, electricity, medicines and nappies and formula. Interviewees disliked using supermarkets as they felt they were expensive, preferring to buy food in bulk from bulk suppliers and markets. However, transport problems limited their shopping options. As a consequence of financial difficulties, women reported food rationing when faced with big bills.

Life is hard here and everything is very expensive. For example I get a big bill of electricity, I can't tell anyone and I feel cold all the time, I have to heat the house. I have friends in Melbourne and they told me they don't pay electricity, other friends in Brisbane told me that food is cheaper than here, so I think life is hard.
(Woman, Central Africa, Hobart)

If you have children, the children use more electricity. Because of the cold we use more heating. Because we are African we cook everyday, we bath with hot water everyday. So if visitors come they can eat if they come by

our addresses. So when we go into that, it's not enough. So sometimes we cut down on food when the power bill comes. We eat rice.
(Woman, West Africa, Hobart)

My husband is staying at home. He has got his eyes operated twice and he has got problems with his teeth, he has got some teeth taken out. And Centrelink is helping us – we get Centrelink money. That is all we got, that is all the money we get at the moment. But that money for my husband isn't even enough for his medication.
(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

6.3 Housing

The research participants reported significant problems with housing. These ranged from the housing found for them by IHSS services through to their own inability to navigate the housing service system or the private rental market.

Those refugees who are not eligible for support from IHSS or settlement services to assist in house hunting can be further disadvantaged, as they must negotiate their way into the private rental market with less support. Interviewees reported that they had problems with 'working out the system of house hunting', that is finding out how to identify, view and apply for properties, and worries about their lack of understanding about the legal and contractual implications of rental agreements.

In the midst of this affordable housing crisis, IHSS services are also competing for the very few affordable properties available for their clients. Research participants noted the amount of work which settlement workers were putting into house-hunting. However, they reported that the housing that was found for them was not affordable, appropriate or providing secure long-term tenancies and they discussed the ways in which this exacerbated other social, financial and health problems they were experiencing. Insecurity of tenure was particularly unsettling for them as they expressed a strong need to feel safe.

Previous Tasmanian research has indicated that many low income families live in a state of transience, moving from one tenancy to another in search of affordable rents and homes that are accessible to community services such as schools and health services (Cameron, 2002). This pattern is being repeated among refugee communities. Research participants repeatedly reported a pattern of moving on from their first home, found for them by the settlement services, as soon as the first 6 month lease expired. The driver for the move was a quest for houses that were affordable or closer to TAFE. This meant further social and educational disruptions just at the point when their access to intensive settlement support services expired.

Good practice

Anglicare's research findings suggest that some aspects of housing provision are working well for refugees. Although many were unsettled by being asked to move out of On Arrival Accommodation after a short period, the provision of this housing was deeply appreciated and commented on. The assistance of the IHSS service workers to find the first house was also cited as an important aide in the first weeks of settlement. For many interviewees the housing provided by individual sponsors or church groups providing support to sponsors had been affordable and of good standard. They also expressed confidence that they could remain in the housing while they needed it. Interviewees also reported usage of PRSS services to get access to rent in advance and bond monies.

However, discussions around housing dominated the focus groups, and were focussed on the problems new entrants were facing in the housing market.

Problems with the housing market

Their difficulty in finding housing was a major issue for the research participants. They identified particular needs they had within the housing market: housing that provided a sense of physical safety and was a secure tenancy, which was close to services, shopping facilities and the city, and which could accommodate large family sizes. However, due to their circumstances they encountered particular problems with finding such housing in the public sector and the private rental market, discussed below.

The ongoing housing problems identified by research participants were affordability, access, overcrowding, being forced to live in poor quality housing, landlords who failed to do basic maintenance, and threatened or actual homelessness. The consequences of this for the settlement process were extreme.

A background to the discussions about housing was the expectations they had had of what houses in Australia would be like. Many had thought that all houses in Australia were large, with large rooms and multiple bedrooms. A number of research participants reported being told prior to embarkation to Australia that they would be supplied with housing, presumably a reference to the On Arrival Accommodation funded by DIAC. Understandings of this varied, but many had assumed that this provision was long-term. The reality of the substantial proportion of income which low income earners pay for housing costs was clearly a shock for many participants, some of whom had little or no experience of paying rental.

Cost of housing

High rental costs were repeatedly identified as a critical problem, putting pressure on household budgets. Some participants reported using financial counselling services to assist them to develop household budgets and payment plans, but that even after receiving this specialist support they found themselves in financial stress – and they identified rental costs as a major factor in this.

> *It is very difficult for me in my house right now because I don't have any income other than Centrelink. It is just enough to feed the kids and rent and everything.*
> ***(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

Rent increases

The Tenants' Union of Tasmania argues that the issue of unreasonable rent increase is a pressing one in Tasmania, with the Residential Tenancy Act generally ineffective and not fully protecting the rights of tenants (TUT, 2006). A number of interviewees reported substantial rent increases at the end of short-term leases. Abrupt rent increases of up to 36% were quoted. Some interviewees had left the properties and sought new accommodation as a consequence of the rent increases, others reported that they felt they had had no choice but to stay.

> *I was looking for a house for a long time. I am living in New Town it is very expensive. When we were in the house the owner sold the house to a new landlord so whatever a new landlord wants to do he can do it. So next month we start paying $460 a fortnight.*
> ***(Woman, West Africa, Hobart)***

Location of available housing

Location of housing is a big issue for refugee communities and has been identified as a potential barrier to their progress through the housing market (Beer and Foley, 2003). Research participants identified a number of ways in which location of housing was an important issue to them – a primary one was whether it enabled them to get access to their English language classes or not. However, living close to other community members was also important to addressing the social isolation they experienced during the settlement phase.

> *When we first arrived we were living at [outer suburb]. The place was very far and if you were late in town you couldn't catch the bus to go back there, so we had to move. After the 6 months everybody decided to find a place.*
> ***(Woman, West Africa, Hobart)***

Poor quality housing

A number of the research participants reported that they lived in housing which had significant problems. Common among the problems listed by the participants were that the houses they rented were dirty, damp, leaking, had no heating or malfunctioning wood heaters, poor ventilation, no hot water, dirty and bad smelling carpets, and stoves which did not work.

The dampness and coldness of Tasmanian rental properties was a particular issue for many of the refugees interviewed. Participants described houses with moisture on walls and roofs, poor ventilation, and little or no heating systems.

Two years ago the house was very cold and the government [Housing Tasmania] couldn't help me and everyone had coughs and colds but then what happened was we got poisoned by the smoke and the whole family went to the hospital. Since then the Royal Hobart Hospital doctor and my doctor he wrote a letter to Housing Tasmania to find me a house but they couldn't help.
(Man, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

The following research participant had managed to secure housing by accepting a property found for her through private networks which she was told had been officially declared unsuitable for habitation.

At the moment I live in a private house …I didn't find my house myself but a kind of family friend, a white lady, she talked to the lady and then the lady offered me the house. Actually when I moved there people were not living there because the house was not in good condition. I was the only one living in the house because the Council has accepted that people could not live in that house… So until this year when the council has sent approval letter for people to come and live in other units I was the only one living in the house.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Housing and ill-health

Many of the refugees reported that they, their spouses or children had had repeated colds, coughs and chest infections since arrival in Tasmania. A number reported that they had been diagnosed with asthma since arrival in Tasmania. Their respiratory problems were directly attributed by many of them to the coldness and dampness of their homes.

We got an old house and it is very cold. When the place is cold my wife's asthma come up. So since we there her asthma come up everyday.
(Man, West Africa, Launceston)

At last we accepted a place that is really stinky which is the cause of my health problems. It really smells; it is really suffocating. So in the night if someone wakes up before me they have to open up everything and let fresh air come in before I wake up otherwise I feel really sick. If the door is not open when I am waking up it makes me really sick and it blocks my nose and my lungs.
(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

I am suffering because of my house. I need help with this house because it has got mould and water on the walls. I think this is making my children and my wife and me sick because the health of my children and my wife has been bad for the whole winter. They cough and they have colds. I went to the doctor and the doctor knows what problems I have. So I got a letter from him to get another house and he told me to find another house, but the doctor couldn't help me.
(Man, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

The state of the carpets in rental properties was commented on by a number of research participants who strongly associated bad smelling carpets with ill health, particularly in children.

The house I live in right now the condition is not very good. The carpet is very smelly so the kids are getting sick. The house I am living in, I want to move out because I do not have hot water. It has been like this for a year and a half. I have talked to the landlord but he doesn't fix it. The owner of the house he doesn't do anything. He just comes, looks around and leaves.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

My house is well located but it's very dirty, it's really very dirty. The carpet is very dirty and it smells and the ceiling it's got something like a spider web and then when I try to clean it makes me feel very sick. So now what I do is I leave it as it is but open the doors and windows. My little boy is not asthmatic he is unwell with other things but my 5-year-old daughter is unwell and we took her to the doctor and it turns out she is getting asthma. We knew that the house was not good before we moved into it but we do not have any choice. We are not going to live on the streets with children so what can we do? I just accepted it for the sake of my children.

Instead of letting my children sleep on the streets I chose to be sick. That is the only reason I moved into that house.
(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

Cold, damp and smelly houses were not just a cause of ill-health for participants and their children - they also associated them with despondency and depression.

The problem for me, my house is very cold and the floor [has] no carpet. Very cold. The children are sick every day in winter. Money $420 for rent a fortnight. Very cold. I used the heater, that one you can go and buy oil, but it is not enough for me because there is no carpet. It is still cold. It is not enough heating and it costs me a lot of money to buy the gas. It's a lot of money. Can we ask you – why don't refugees live in good houses like white people?
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

The place my case worker found for me it was too far for me, on the weekend it was too far for me. And I came in the winter time. It was cold. It was very cold. It was dark and depressing. It was not good.
(Woman, West Africa, Hobart)

Overcrowding

Overcrowding was a problem for the interviewees. This was both because of their large family sizes and because of families being forced to share houses. Common experiences of overcrowding were when newly arrived families lived with the sponsors on arrival. Sometimes this arrangement, intended to be temporary, extended to prolonged periods because of their difficulties in finding rental properties.

I have a big family, 9 people, and we fill 21 forms to get a house and we have hard times. The difficulty is that when we come we didn't stay in a house by ourselves, we stay with our uncle. Now we live by ourselves. We are sick of filling forms in with our sponsor and we are sick of hearing 'sorry, sorry, sorry' without any explanation of why we didn't get the house. The house we stayed at first time, we come as 9 and the people living there, they are 8, so that is 17. It was a 4 bedroom house.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Overcrowding was forcing families to crowd numbers of children into bedrooms, or for different generations to share one bedroom – a stressful situation which compounded the family stresses of adjusting to a new country.

I am living with my children in one room. I live with my sister and her children. I have 2 children and my sister has 2 also. There are 2 bedrooms in our house and there are 6 people living in the house. I am not happy because the room is too small. I have two children and it does not fit us. The most important thing is to have a house and have shelter and we hope the Government can give us that.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Launceston)

After I had my baby, I was so stressed and at that time I couldn't get a house. No place for me, the place was so squeezed. I was living with my sister but the room was so tiny, there are 3 in the same room: me, my mum with my little daughter because I have got two children.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Another problem for participants was the inadequacy of the communal areas. Small kitchens, lounge rooms and dining areas meant that it was impossible to sustain critical family and cultural traditions of shared meals.

The house is not big enough for our family. We are a big family. We don't even have a dining room. There are 7 people living in the house. It has 4 bedrooms. We could have managed the bedrooms, the problem is the living room and the dining room. We don't have anywhere to eat our food so it's really small. I am paying $920 a month on rent, so it is too much.
(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

Frequent moves

Many of the research participants reported patterns of insecure and short term housing. Housing histories were gathered from 21 of the

research participants. Three of these respondents had arrived in Tasmania more than five years ago, that is, prior to the housing boom, and had secured stable housing – one had moved into home ownership. However, the newer arrivals typically had patterns of short term tenures in the private rental market. The 18 who had been in Tasmania for 3 - 5 years had moved house on average every 11 months. The highest level of transience was among the newest arrivals. The 13 respondents who had been in Tasmania for 2 years or less had on average moved house every 9 months. These figures do not include the first few weeks stay in on-arrival accommodation.

> *I don't want to move around Hobart. I just want to settle. I just need places to settle down. Today here, tomorrow my kids at another school I don't want to do that. It's no good for my kids; moving school all the time! We just need a place to settle one place. That's all I needed.*
> ***(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

> *I have lived in Tasmania for 3 years and I have lived in many houses. From the beginning [if your] family wants to [find] a new house you just looking [for houses] as your job. You look at this one, this one, this one, this one, this one; maybe weekly, maybe couple of weeks, maybe monthly you just looking at house. And then if your family got a lot of children, 5 or 6, you can't find easily a house.*
> ***(Man, South-central Asia, Launceston)***

Homelessness/risk of homelessness

I can't be sure how many houses we applied for but I am thinking at least 30 something. We had a contract on this house for 3 months [short-term emergency housing] so we renewed it again. We looked at one yesterday but we are sure we are not going to get it.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

None of the interviewees reported experiencing primary homelessness, that is, the level of homelessness generally associated with sleeping rough[9]. However, at the time of interview three of the refugees and their families were housed in short-term emergency housing. Further, one had been housed, with her children, in a crisis shelter while without housing, and a number had been housed by friends when faced with homelessness, meeting the criteria for secondary homelessness. They reported that this had resulted in overcrowding, family conflict, and high levels of stress.

> *Every time I go apply for a house and fill a form they say it has been taken by somebody else. They say I can only stay in this house [short-term emergency housing] for 3 months and I have been here 9 months so I do not feel comfortable to live here no more because I am over the limit that they will let me stay.*
> ***(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

One woman had managed to get public housing, but only after she and her children had become homeless and forced to move into a shelter. In the process of moving between houses and shelters her older children had left home, to find independent accommodation.

> *After my lease expired my friend told me I'm going to talk to the Women's Shelter and maybe in the future they can find you a house. And she talk to the lady and that lady said, "I can offer her one house for 6 weeks and then we try to talking to the Housing". I just living in the Shelter. It's not really my house it's just for 6 weeks. And when this whole thing happen they put me in Category One. And the lady [SAAP worker] fighting, writing letter…And then they swapped me to [IHSS provider] and the lady there just talking to the Housing every day, every day, and then they just decide, "We have house for you".*
> ***(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

[9] This report adopts the three tiered system of classification developed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (cited in Beer & Foley, 2003). For a further description see Section 4.9.

Discrimination in the private rental market

There was a strong perception among research participants that they were discriminated against in the competition for rental properties. Three reasons were proffered for this belief: the fact that they had observed properties remaining empty or being readvertised after their applications had been denied, the lack of any explanation, reasonable or otherwise, as to why their application had been unsuccessful; and their experience of sharp increases in rent which they felt to be associated with their particular vulnerability in the rental market.

> *The house is empty. They never give it to me. When I come back there is nobody, the house is sitting there and even months and months nobody comes. Maybe he wants somebody Australian to be living there.*
> ***(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

A high level of frustration was expressed with the lack of feedback on failed applications as it was felt that any direction from real estate agents and landlords at all would assist them in their quest to find housing.

> *Today I can fill like 10 forms and then I don't find anything. And they don't even give me the reason why to fix the fault in that form for next time so I get more chance to get the next house. It is very frustrating. And I think that if white people went there probably they would tell them the reason why they didn't get the house. They treat us like animals not like human beings.*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

Housing Tasmania: stock and assessment criteria

To live in public housing was a widespread aspiration of the research participants. The affordability and security of tenure were the two features of public housing which were most desired. However there was a poor match between the needs of refugees and Housing Tasmania assessment criteria and stock. Available public housing stock is too small for large families or may have problems like no areas for children to play. Housing Tasmania assessment criteria allocate points on the basis of need. Refugees may find themselves allocated points for public housing because they are in financial stress or housing crisis but not because of settlement or cultural needs. Public housing therefore is only potentially available as an intervention when the settlement process is undermined by crisis rather than as a foundation to good settlement outcomes.

> *When they [IHSS service] got for us a house, it was so expensive. Things were so difficult for me to pay. I was paying $560 a fortnight. And when the bills come, like $700 to pay, it was really so difficult for me. I got so stressed and I didn't know what to do. I went to seek some advice from Migrant Resource Centre, there is a counsellor. And she counselled me how to work things out for family costs. She said I am very young to have two babies. After she counselled me she gave me some money to pay for the bills. Because my income support I am not able to pay all those things. And I went to Housing Tasmania. When I went there I applied I told them my situation was not good, I am not able to pay for all those things, maybe if they could get me a government house. They told me there are people who are waiting, and waiting, and waiting and they don't have anywhere to stay and at least me I have somewhere to say. I said it is too much for me sometimes I end up with no food when I pay all the bills. The rent is $560 a fortnight. The government couldn't get for me a house. They are making me wait for so long.*
> ***(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

Some participants also commented on the bureaucratic conundrum which meant that the risk of homelessness, leading to them being housed by community service organisations in short term emergency accommodation, lowered their chances of getting access to secure housing in the form of public housing.

> *They should be better organized because they look at your record, and they say you are receiving help from the Migrant Resource Centre we will put you down to category 3 or 4, because if you are in a temporary house this would bring you down.*
> ***(Man, West Africa, Launceston)***

A strong recommendation which emerged from the refugees interviewed was for there to be an increase in the supply of affordable housing for refugees. The following interviewee pointed out that Government assistance through bond assistance simply helps entry into the private rental market, it does not make tenancies sustainable.

> *And the other thing is the money we have among ourselves, if [bond assistance service] helps us with the bond we are grateful, but as we have just arrived here to settle, and with what we receive from the government, it is good, but you get it and you spend it because what we spend on houses is too much. If they could go and get some government housing for us, the migrants coming in, so that when we come instead of looking for house and paying more, they put them into government houses.*
> ***(Man, West Africa, Launceston)***

It was also suggested that ensuring affordable and secure housing for refugees was part of the humanitarian obligation of developed countries in resettling displaced people.

> *If the government can help us it would be good. When the people get here they need to be accommodated in these countries. Therefore we should look after these people with care. There are some people who come here who have had a difficult time in the camps. When they come here they need to be supported and we need to take that responsibility to be 'care-ful'.*
> ***(Young Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

Service gaps: accommodation case planning and support

IHSS services are required to assist new arrivals to find a house to move into after they exit from On Arrival Accommodation. Should this tenancy end after they have ceased to be eligible for IHSS services, some support in house hunting is given through the Settlement Grants Program funded settlement services but most are directed on to the general housing service system. Within the housing system, services exist to assist low income earners with financial help with bonds and rent in arrears or advance and support with the cost of moving. The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) also funds services to support individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to navigate the housing system and look for housing. These latter services provide case management which can support people meeting certain criteria to stabilise their accommodation. However, the narratives of the research participants suggest that refugees are falling through the gaps of the housing service system. The intensive level of support the interviewees required, that is, assistance with house hunting and assistance to complete forms, is not available from housing services.

> *When I went to [housing service] to get help to get a house, they just give me heaps of numbers to ring – I can't communicate with them and I don't know where to go. [The housing service] use a translator on the phone and they give me a map but I don't know my way around. I need help with the forms. I can't fill in the forms. I can't get my message across to the people there, that I need a house. So they give me forms and I don't know how to fill them in.*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

> *The first house I lived in for one year and after that the landlord told me to move out so I went back to the [settlement grants program service] and asked for help to find another house but the [settlement grants program service] didn't help me so I went to [bond assistance service] but they told me that I needed to find the house.*
> ***(Man, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

The consequences of their referral to an under-resourced housing system was evident in the interviews. Some refugees had been referred to SAAP services but found that the assistance offered by these services did not meet their need for a high level of support due to linguistic, cultural and literacy issues.

Stories of contradictory information from housing services and settlement services providers about eligibility for bond assistance were recounted. It was also clear that the financial support offered was not at a level to meet their needs.

Interviewees were confused about what assistance was available to them and what obligations receiving help placed on them. They reported great difficulties with house hunting even with assistance from other community members who may have been bicultural workers from settlement grants program funded services. They felt their vulnerability had resulted in them signing leases for houses which caused financial crisis, and to them being exploited.

> *When I arrived at the [settlement service provider] and spoke to a [worker] and he just bought a lease and he asked me to sign and he said don't worry you will get help from Centrelink for your rent assistance. I did not know what this rent assistance was – I thought it was his money, so I had to sign the lease or he will not give me the money. So I had to live at that house. But then the rent assistance was $80 and my Youth Allowance was $335 and when I received the money I paid $250 rent. There was no money left for food. It left very little money. I had to move so it was very expensive. Nobody helped me to find a new house.*
> ***(Man, West Africa, Hobart)***

This difficulty in getting appropriate support resulted in people feeling highly vulnerable and anxious. Many people seemed unaware of where to go for assistance. If they were not receiving support from settlement service workers, they were faced with a complex service system and were unclear about whom to approach for assistance. There was considerable evidence of people approaching a broad range of community services and agencies, even doctors and hospital staff asking for housing assistance.

> *Life never changed for me. My husband was sick and he hasn't fully recovered. The owners of the house told us to leave the house while I was in hospital for a caesarean. And then we asked the owners of the house to extend one more month so we could find another house but they resisted and we had to leave the house. And I am an asthmatic now and the baby was unwell and he is still struggling. Life is really difficult and it hasn't changed much. Our support people tried to find us a house but it was really difficult. They told us to go to a friend's place to live there but we said we can't go with 4 children. We went to the [Settlement Grants Program service] to ask them if they had any accommodation but they said no we don't have any. We told the hospital, when I was in the hospital that we had nowhere to go but the hospital said they can only keep me there for 3 days, so that is all they can do. But at last we accepted a place which is the cause of my health problems so I don't have a choice to do that. We ask the housing department if they could help us. They say they are looking for a house but we have been in that house for a year now and nothing is happening, nothing is changing.*
> ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

Asserting rights as tenants

While some of the participants with problems with their tenancies had pursued their rights with the assistance of Legal Aid or the Tenants' Union, many had not. For new communities there are broader issues around asserting their rights as tenants than simply their lack of knowledge of residential tenancy legislation. Many interviewees were not familiar with, or aware of the existence of advocacy organisations. A number reported their ignorance of the need for condition reports before signing a lease – this seemed to particularly be an issue for SHP entrants. Experience had made participants acutely aware of their vulnerability in the private rental market and they were fearful of antagonising landlords and losing their tenancies.

There are also cultural differences around the management of disputes and conflict. In the following passage, a member of an African community reacted with alarm to the suggestion that he take his problems to the Tenants' Union. His response suggests that he found such a course overly formal and aggressive – he describes a preferred path which would allow an informal or social approach. The interview suggests a need for housing advocates who can also act as cultural mediators.

> *I don't want to put pressure on the landlord. I have to rent this house by myself but I wouldn't feel good if I put pressure on the landlord through the Tenants' Union. I just*

want to do it by my own. I don't want to lose the house. And I don't know the landlord too much, I only know his office [the real estate agent]. And whenever I go to his office I don't find him. So in that way I don't want to put pressure on him. It's better for me to do it by my own, perhaps go to his house, because I don't have clothes for a meeting. The landlord knows the house is very old so he should repair it. But if I went to Tenants' Union and the Tenants' Union pushed him to fix that house I wouldn't be able to stay in that house because I would feel bad for pushing the landlord.
(Man, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

Landlords and maintenance

Many research participants reported problems in getting basic maintenance done by landlords or real estate agents. The maintenance problems cited included stoves which did not work, broken hot water systems, flickering lights, no heating systems, broken heating systems, decayed floors and floor coverings, leaking roofs and problems with damp on walls and ceilings. In a number of instances these problems had remained unaddressed for many months – two participants reported that they had been waiting for repairs to their stoves for more than a year.

We have this landlord who was really, really unhappy to fix the stove and we have been using a gas stove. It is a small camping stove. I am cooking for a family of five. We are really scared about the children; using that stove. And he has been telling us he will get it fixed for two years and that he wants us to sign a new lease. He will come to us the last day and say sign a lease and we will say if you do not fix the stove we will not sign the lease, but then because he knows we are not capable of doing other things he will insist and we will sign it and then we will not see him for another six months.
(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

The landlord locked wood heater up. And he won't open it. I went to ask him to open it so we can heat the house but he says he won't open it because he said the house is old so it might burn so he wouldn't be happy to open it for me. There is no other heating in the house.
(Man, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

Bonds

A number of the refugees interviewed for this project reported difficulties in getting their bond money returned. This experience is consistent with the findings of research into the private rental market in Tasmania (cited in Anglicare, 2005). The experiences of the refugees were consistent with those of other tenants: landlords who did not get condition reports and bond monies used to pay for pre-existing damage, routine maintenance and unwarranted professional cleaning.

However, some of the other concerns about bond were specific to their situation as refugees. As a group in the community, refugees are particularly lacking in resources – they have few or no assets or possessions, little or possibly no income, and few networks of support. In spite of this some refugees who have exited the IHSS system found that financial assistance services geared to assist low income people in the private rental market may still require them to find a substantial proportion of their bond and rent in advance.

When we rented it he [the landlord] asked us to pay a bond of $2000. He said if we didn't pay the money we couldn't enter. The problem we had, we come new to Australia, where we going to get the money from? So what we done, we didn't know where to turn to so we borrowed money from people to get the $2000. [Bond assistance service] gave us $750 and the rest came from loans. We just borrowed it from people and we paid it back. We had to have somewhere to live. The problem was we had to cut really, really short on food to pay them back because it was very embarrassing for us to see somebody and know we owed them money.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

In addition, stories of contradictory information from service providers from housing services and settlement services about eligibility for bond assistance were recounted.

Further, some real estate agents refuse to accept bond guarantees from Government-funded bond assistance services. This had a particular impact on the refugees with their limited financial resources. Some reported being forced to borrow money to cover these costs at some personal hardship.

There was a strong perception among the interviewees from the new African communities that some landlords were particularly discriminating against Africans. *"They waiting for the African coming and then they take the bonds so they can repair."* Research participants who were on SHP visas particularly identified issues around bonds and the need for condition reports as a gap in information provided to them by their sponsors.

Some of the research participants had had support from the Tenants' Union and Legal Aid in challenging unfair claims against their bonds. A central depository of security bonds, similar to the models run in other Australian states, is to be established in Tasmania in October 2007. It is hoped this will promote consumer protection and address many of these problems.

Housing stresses and settlement

> *I don't care where I live as long as I would be comfortable [safe] because I been in problems [a war] back home.*
> ***(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

For many people interviewed their difficult experiences in the housing market had fed feelings of alienation from the Australian community. Strong feelings of resentment at being racially discriminated against were expressed in both the focus groups and the individual interviews. This resentment, bred by the failure of the market to provide for them, was in interesting contrast to their comments on restraints on access to the public health system where widespread acceptance was expressed of co-payment charges, the necessity of purchasing service from private providers, waiting times in hospitals and long waits for appointments with specialists. In response to these barriers there was a broad acceptance that these waits were common to all, and that race made no difference, and that therefore through its health system Australia had done its best to help their settlement.

> *I've got a friend who wants to move here but when they find out there no housing and it is a trouble to find house, they don't come. And most of the people they moved away. It's not because they cannot find a job or something. They move because they don't feel comfortable here, that you cheated them and there is not friendliness with the Australian people here, how they treated them here, especially with the housing situation.*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

> *He asked around Tasmania and around Australia – nobody paid $2000 bond except him. He thinks if you were white you wouldn't pay that much.*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

> *The health care is hard but whatever happens happens to everybody, the house is the problem. How can you help us with that, with housing?*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

7. Refugees' experiences against settlement indicators: health and wellbeing

Section 7 analyses the data against those indicators of settlement broadly grouped as indicators of physical and mental health status. DIAC's analysis suggests that better health is correlated with improvements in English language skills and gaining employment. Further, it is recognised that significant numbers of humanitarian entrants show signs of stress and depression in the early settlement period.

7.1 Physical health

Good practice

While the research participants discussed health concerns, many of the issues with refugee access to health care identified in the literature were not evident in Anglicare's interviews. The problems cited in the research include a lack of awareness of the role of general practitioners and the role of appointments – a delay in seeking assistance and a dependence on pharmacological regimes, an acceptance of sub-optimal health and lack of familiarity with concepts of consent and confidentiality (see for example VFTS, 2004:23-24).

Even though some of the research participants identified complex and ongoing health problems, there was a level of satisfaction expressed with the health services they had received from general practitioners, hospitals and specialists. This may be due in part to the development by the Tasmanian State Government of a comprehensive guide to refugee health issues which has been distributed to all medical practitioners in Tasmania (DHHS, 2005).

Interviewees noted the problems faced by the public health system – waiting times for appointments, waiting times in hospital clinics – but repeatedly commented that this was a problem for the whole community, not just refugee arrivals. All but one of the refugees interviewed were registered with a general practitioner and all of those who were registered felt they could get appointments with their GP if they needed them. For some too, long term health problems were addressed on arrival, leading to a better level of health than they had experienced previously.

> *In the beginning my kids having malaria. The small one was really having chronic malaria and had to go immediate to the hospital. And my older son someone hitting him before in the kidney. And then in the [refugee assessment] process, in the medical, the doctor seen him writing a special note saying when you get to Australia go to get checked or maybe the kidneys were damaged. And then we come here we find the letter already there in the hospital and they checking him and they give the treatment. They say it's bad. Now he feeling better – he was really bad - and now it's fine.*
> ***(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

> *The problem we had is because of the system down here, not because of black or white. The problem is that when we went to the emergency room we stayed for long time. That is not because of black or white, that is the health system here. When I got hurt I rang an ambulance and the ambulance come straight away and they took me to the hospital and I sitting there from 5 o'clock in afternoon until 12 o'clock at night. When I stayed for long there, when I see the doctor there they help me with my pain. I really appreciate the good job they do there and how they try to cover everything. So then when I feel angry, the anger goes away.*
> ***(Man, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

New entrants arriving in Hobart have access to the State government funded Refugee and Humanitarian Arrivals Clinic (RAHAC), a specialist clinic within the Royal Hobart Hospital. The clinic can conduct initial assessment of newly arrived refugees and it also accepts referrals from General Practitioners. It offers a comprehensive health assessment service with a particular focus on infectious illnesses. The value of RAHAC in addressing real health issues and easing the health anxieties of refugee arrivals was expressed by one new entrant.

> *I think I have maybe homesick. I think if you stress you can damage your health. Because I was stress. I don't know what to do, because*

no language, I don't know how people talking to me, I don't know where to go and then I feel sick. I went to the doctor they test everything and everything come normal! They say "You not sick!" I said "I have pain here! Just there!" I think this is all coming in the stress. You know? The doctor say, "Maybe you have pain and maybe you come from dangerous place. You come from Africa and maybe you don't have the treatment". And then he test me and send me to Royal Hobart Hospital, take the blood check everything. They say, "You don't have anything! Your blood all coming normal!" I say, "What's that pain?" They say, "Nothing." They say, "You got worries." That's what they telling me.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Problems: complex and ongoing health needs

Some of the research participants identified complex and ongoing health problems that they were dealing with, particularly unspecified issues with pain which may or may not have been the somatisation disorders which have been identified as a particular issue with torture and trauma survivors (DHHS, 2005). Some interviewees, familiar with medical responses in their own countries, were frustrated by the difference in the Australian medical system and treatments. A number reported visiting their doctors repeatedly about ongoing pain and feeling unsatisfied with the response.

In Africa when you have diarrhoea you can have medicine for it and you can get medicine for headache or whatever or any treatment, but here when you are sick you go to the doctor and you don't get anything.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Launceston)

When you first arrive here it is really good, like the [settlement service] staff will welcome you and settle you in but the difficulties, the things I have experienced and is still experiencing now, is the health issues. Like when you go to the hospital you won't get any treatment. They will just say you are ok and give you painkiller. All the time. It is really hard. And I am still experiencing it now. I find it really hard. I have been here nearly four years. I had a problem with pain in my hips and it is really hurting me badly but up till now I didn't get any treatment and I find it hard to bear the pain like that. I went many times to the hospital about the pain, many times, right at the time when I arrived here. I had a lot, a lot of problems but there was no treatment. They didn't tell exactly what the pain is, and whether it is there or not.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Launceston)

At the time of interviewing a specialist refugee medical clinic did not exist in Launceston. The need for such a service, which recognised the particular histories of long term hardship and trauma faced by members of their communities, was discussed in focus groups held there.

The doctors should give us special consideration because we just came from the war zone so there is a lot of diseases and a lot of sickness and the water is not good – everything is not good. People that are here, they have been looked after throughout their life. For us it is hard. It is different because it is harder – in Africa there is no health centre, no medical centre, no medicines because of the war. So they should have different regulations for them, for their treatment, than for those who are here. People that are here do not have bullet wounds, but for us it is a lot. Always, when there is a pain in your body, you won't be happy. So the most important thing is the health of the person. If they can help that health to be good there is no problem, everything is good.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Launceston)

Interpreters

Research participants reported that medical practitioners did largely make use of both TIS and on-site professional interpreters although there were issues arising from the lack of choice of interpreters. Incidents arising from this problem, such as telephone interpreters they couldn't understand or male interpreters being sent to obstetric appointments, were recounted. In some instances, if an acceptable interpreter was not available, members of new communities reported being forced to use their children or other family members and some were unhappy about the

inappropriateness of this. It was also pointed out that while actual medical appointments might use interpreters communicating with reception staff and actually making the appointment in the first place was very difficult.

Oral health

Oral health was one area of health causing ongoing difficulties for some research participants. Refugees reported experiencing long waits for treatment at the public dental service or being forced out of the public health system, to make appointments with private practitioners at considerable cost.

> *Once the doctor said that my mother has to pull out her front teeth and the doctor said that they make an appointment themselves to do the process of pulling out the tooth but it is about one year and there is nothing from them.*
> ***(Woman, South-central Asia, Launceston)***

> *There is no dentist here. It's a big problem. One time about six months ago I rang the dentist because I had a problem and they said I will call you and they never called.*
> ***(Man, Southern Europe, Burnie)***

> *There is no concession. One time I went to see the dentist and they charged me about two hundred and something dollars*
> ***(Man, West Africa, Launceston)***

Asthma

An emerging health issue among the new African communities was widespread asthma. Many of the research participants reported that they or their children had become asthmatic since arriving in Tasmania – they blamed this problem on the cold climate and cold and damp housing.

> *My life was difficult because I was not feeling well. When I came here I became asthmatic so I have to keep going to the doctor and I couldn't do any education. I can't take any course, I can't follow up my English course. I am unwell and it has made my life very difficult. But the government is giving us money so that is the only support. I didn't have asthma before I got it here. For 6 months I was ok, then after 6 months it started attacking me and I only found out recently I am asthmatic. I don't really know what the reason is.*
> ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

> *Both of my children were so sick with asthma. Now she is supposed to go for childcare but she is so sick.*
> ***(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

7.2 Mental health

Research participants were not asked about pre-arrival trauma, although a number made reference to past trauma. They identified two particular areas of stress which were having an impact on their mental and emotional wellbeing: family reunion and the process of mental and cultural adjustment to Australian life.

Family Reunion

The issue of family reunion was a distressing one for the interviewees. The SHP is a key vehicle for family reunion. It has a 'split family' provision which enables refugees to propose family members from whom they are separated so long as these people are listed on their initial application for settlement in Australia. Family members are high priority for visas if they are spouses, dependent children or the parent of under 18-year-olds in Australia. Further criteria attempt to determine the immediacy and genuineness of the relationship and the degree of risk faced by the person overseas.

There was confusion among many interviewees about what visa category they had arrived under. However, ten participants indicated that they had been sponsored to come to Australia by family or friends, suggesting that they had arrived under the SHP.

However, none of the refugees interviewed had been successful in their own applications to bring either close or extended family members to Australia although the majority had tried to do so. While a number of interviewees indicated that they had been told that only one in 10 applications for family members was successful, others clearly had had expectations on settlement that close family members would follow them to Australia.

Many of the interviewees had made use of the free migration agent service made available through the Migrant Resource Centre in Hobart. However they reported long waiting periods for appointments, long delays in waiting on documents from overseas and a lack of information from DIAC on the reasons for refusal for the applications.

Tasmania does not appear to be faring well in sponsoring people of concern to come to Australia. While the SHP program nationally constitutes over half of the humanitarian intake for Australia, in the period 2001- 2005, it represented only 25% of the Humanitarian Program intake in Tasmania (DIMA, 2006c). Furthermore, it appears that within the current system some communities are more successful in sponsoring people than others[10]. The reasons for this are not clear, but the people interviewed for this project believed that in part the problem was due to their difficulties in understanding the forms' requirements and filling them in correctly.

The distress expressed in the focus groups about this subject made it clear that emotionally this was one of the most difficult problems the interviewees were facing in settlement. Some interviewees indicated that learning English and settling in was impossible while they were anxious about the fate of family members, particularly ones they feared were vulnerable to harm, and they were grief-stricken at what now appeared to be life-long separation from children, step-children, parents, siblings, grandchildren, fiancés, and orphaned nieces and nephews whom they regarded as their responsibility. Some interviewees questioned whether they would have made the decision to come to Australia if they had known that they were abandoning their relatives.

> *If I knew that this was going to happen, how could I leave my sister's daughter, who hasn't got a mother who hasn't got a father, who hasn't got anyone who could protect her? I am not worried about the boys, because they can sleep anywhere. But the girls! I would not have come. How could I leave her and come? I just left her and came.*
> ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

> *I only have one daughter, the whole process she was with me. Her photos were taken, she was approved. I don't understand why she has to stay back [in the refugee camp]. And then I tried to sponsor her and nothing happens. And that is why I am feeling unwell, it is really distressing. Look I only have one daughter – she has three children, my grandchildren. They have never been away from me. When I speak to them on the phone they say, "Where are you? Why don't you come? Why don't you take us?" For me this is really difficult – we have left our country [for a country of first asylum] 35 years ago. My daughter doesn't know her country, she has never been there. [Breaks down] Yes. I am really upset. I can't understand the language, I can't understand the life. I can't. I can't. I go to school and everything is blocked. I get stressed. I get upset. I cry; that's what I do. I can't do much. I am very unwell. So that is really difficult.*
> ***(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)***

A number of interviewees expressed a strong sense of betrayal by authorities – they felt they had been led to believe that once settled in Australia there would be opportunities to reunite with family where in fact these opportunities did not exist.

[10] Of the 37 Humanitarian Entrants Reunions Scheme Loans issued since 2003, 31 have gone to people who identified themselves as members of the Sudanese community (Tipping, pers.comm., 2007). Of the 351 Special Humanitarian Program entrants who arrived in Tasmania from 2000 to 2006, 79% were born in Sudan (DIAC, 2007b) although this figure may include people of other ethnicities born in Sudan.

We were told that we will be reunited with our family members. They told me once you are in Australia you can propose them. My husband's daughter was in our application but because she has got children she could not come with us and they told us she will follow us, she will be reunited with us. But nothing happened. Yes we were told that. We were lied to. How can you expect me to be in Australia, leaving my only daughter? She hasn't got anyone there. What for, why should I come here? Why would I leave my daughter and come here? What is this for me? When they told me 'no she is not travelling with me' they told me she would be reunited with me in six months. That is what I was expecting. How could they do this?
(Woman, Horn of Africa, Hobart)

DIAC information around family reunification reflects some of the difficulties with processing applications. An emphasis is placed on ensuring that entrants 'understand the importance of providing bona fide information to government departments. Many entrants do not understand the gravity of providing misleading statements or fraudulent documents to government departments.' (DIMA, 2006b). However, the narratives of interviewees demonstrate the difficulty of providing information in the form required particularly for those with literacy problems in their own language. Examples included the relatives they wished to sponsor having to pay scribes to fill in forms for them and unable to check the accuracy of what is written because they cannot read it, long separations resulting in gaps in knowledge about relative's circumstances, and different cultural understandings of marriage and parent-child relationships.

There were also indications that the process established to vet proposals struggled to deal with non-western concepts of family and family obligation, particularly with members of African communities. The interviewees reported bearing a high level of responsibility for orphaned children within a broad family network and these relationships were clearly of enormous emotional significance. Interviewees from these communities repeatedly interchanged the words for nephews, nieces and step-children with those for children, suggesting the closeness of those relationships. The research participants recounted their inability to sponsor even orphaned young children who were gravely at risk.

I have my cousins in Kakuma[11] and my mum sent them a form about 3 times now and they have been rejected. So she sent another one and we are still waiting because they are about 11, 6 and 7 – they are kids and they are living by themselves. Mum really wants them to get here because no-one is looking after them. The government says that their life history wasn't that bad but I don't think so because the life there is very bad and my mum explains what they have been through. Because their parents died and they have no adults to look after them.
(Young woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

I tried to get my younger brother and sister. But they also rejected them. They didn't tell me the reason. My brother and sister are in Uganda and they are very young and they don't have anybody to take care of them. One is 16 and the other one is 12. They are in a refugee camp and they don't have anyone to take care of them, they are just on their own.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

In addition, families torn apart by conflict with members missing for decades could find themselves falling foul of assessment systems because they could not provide up to date information about each other. A woman describes the extraordinary coincidence by which she finally found a member of her family, a nephew lost in the conflict and missing for 20 years, but was unable to sponsor him to Australia because in interview he failed to remember the name of one of her daughters, a child born after they last saw each other – presumably exposing them to the suspicion that their claim to relationship was fraudulent.

[11] An 80,000+ person refugee camp in Kenya notorious for gender-based violence, crime and recurrent food shortages.

My nephew is stuck in Egypt. I tried to sponsor him twice. They reject. It's because he can't tell my child's name. That's all. Because when I have these kids he wasn't there so he don't know. He was not on my form but his mother is on my form but I say, "I don't know where they are. I haven't seen them for 20 years". And then I find him in Egypt! We was asking [a newly arrived refugee] about everyone that [he knew fled to] Egypt, and he say they come on this train with this person. And I say, "Oh! This is my sister's son!" And then they give me the phone number [of refugee camp in Egypt]. I try to ring and then I find him! And my son [nephew] he get a interview and fail [because of] just that one girl's name. He don't know her. When you in a interview they gonna [be] asking [about] the family of your auntie, "Can you tell how many children she has and can you tell them name by name?" They trick you, they trick you. They trick you with very, very simple question.
(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Family reunion can play an important role in supporting families to overcome some of the adverse and unexpected consequences of settlement in a new country, such as changed family roles or inter-generational conflict. For example, the following interviewee had indicated at other points in the interview that she was finding settlement extremely difficult due to a combination of poor health, insecure housing and stress and that she had repeatedly tried to sponsor family members in order that she might get family support in raising her teenage sons.

My husband he died in the war. My husband had a brother. When I got to Australia I tried to send a form in 2001 but the form was rejected. Because I got 3 sons and 2 daughters and those boys sometimes they don't understand mum. That is why I tried to bring my brother-in-law and again in 2003 I tried to send again and rejected, 2004 tried again. In 2005 I tried to bring my sister's son and been rejected. It's just hurting; like if I feel sick no one can go and bring my children home from school. ***(Woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)***

A repeated request from the interviewees was for greater communication from DIAC for the reasons for the failure of their applications. This was linked to the hope that with this feedback resubmission would lead to more positive outcomes.

The mental and cultural adjustment to Australian life

Refugees discussed the enormous process of mental and cultural adjustment they had to go through in the process of settlement, in a country in which 'everything is different'. The description of their first days in Tasmania suggest that after arrival many new entrants spend a period feeling euphoric about their arrival in Australia. They describe experiencing intense feelings of gratitude and of relief at being in a place of safety. This heightened state is replaced by the awareness of the magnitude of the task of establishing a new life and dealing with the new legal, medical, educational and social systems and the associated problems detailed throughout this report. In addition to these practicalities, adjustment to Australian life requires a mental adjustment to the culture of a developed country focussed largely on work and individual achievement, nuclear family and material acquisition. This in itself is a difficult adjustment for people whose cultures value communalism and reciprocity.

In Africa your neighbours – well say for example me and you are neighbours – one day I cook and I can call you for lunch sometime. If you go to work and no one is looking after your kids I can take your kids to look after them. Sometimes you can take mine – that is what neighbours are there for. But here you don't do that.
(Young woman, Northern Africa, Hobart)

Back home your neighbour is part of your family – you are friends, everybody is your friend. But here it is different – I don't even know my neighbours' name and we've been living together nearly two years. And that is really hard, you find it so lonely. Even if you speak English or you don't, he [your neighbour] is still part of your life – these are things you get used to, the way you live back home and the way it is so different here, the culture. It's a shock.
(Young woman, Central Africa, Hobart)

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Participants' recommendations

Participants in this research were asked what they thought needed to be done to further help refugee communities to settle in Tasmania. A wide range of suggestions were made from which some strong themes emerged. Their priorities were

- **More public housing stock** so that there would be better access to public housing as part of the settlement process. This was a priority over better access to the private rental market as the housing is affordable and the tenancies are secure.
- **More help to get driving licences** in view of the amount of tutored hours required and the importance of drivers licences in applying for work, staying connected with their communities and doing their shopping.
- **Opportunities to work**, especially in agencies and services that work for the Government or the community so that they can contribute to public life and be role models to young people from refugee communities.They wanted more assistance to find work from the Job Networks, including a focus on building up networks with potential employers for the refugee communities.
- **To be reunited with their families**. Information and support that would help them deal with the application processes with the hope that in meeting the procedural and information requirements they would be able to bring family members to Australia.
- **Action against racism** in the form of Harmony Day projects or broader community education that supported the vision of a multicultural Australia and built on the good initiatives seen in schools.
- **Increased settlement support**. Longer case management from settlement services.
- **Increased income support** to address the pressure on budgets caused by housing stress.
- **More help to make the transition from school into training or employment** for refugee youth who arrive in Australia in secondary or senior secondary school.
- **More help to learn English** beyond the 510 hours provided in initial settlement.

What people wanted most mirrored the hopes for settlement expressed by service providers and Government policy documents – to become socially and economically independent, to settle well and contribute something back to Australia. To do this they most wanted assistance to meet their basic needs – they wanted shelter, employment, a sense of belonging and a sense of safety.

8.2 Anglicare's conclusion and recommendations

It would be possible to listen to the stories of refugees arriving in Tasmania and conclude that while some of the problems they face are specific to their unique and traumatic histories, some are reflective of the experiences of all migrants and some are characteristic of low income earners in Tasmania. Such a conclusion runs the danger of suggesting that only part of the settlement experience is influenced by the experience of dislocation, human rights violations, loss of family, friends, language, country and culture. But of course, in reality this is the all-encompassing context in which refugees seek to build a new life in Australia, the context which makes the navigation of each day such a dogged act of will. And it is the experience of witnessing these daily acts of courage that makes settlement service workers and volunteers such a committed and passionate group of advocates for their clients.

Anglicare's research into the settlement experiences of refugees in Tasmania highlights a number of problems that are being faced by refugee communities which Anglicare believes need to be addressed to ensure that Australia meets its humanitarian obligations in regard to the settlement of refugees. In highlighting these concerns we have also attempted to point out the many areas of State and Federal Government achievement and community support which are evident in the stories of new entrants.

Settlement Services

Australia has a comprehensive service system which assists refugees with resettlement. However, Anglicare's research highlighted some issues around the delivery of settlement services and also raises questions about the adequacy and appropriateness of the current service system for the current refugee intake.

The Australian Cultural Orientation Programme

Anglicare's research found that the AUSCO programme was a valuable orientation program for refugees, especially as it is complemented by a comprehensive orientation programme on arrival. However, Anglicare's research also suggests that the program must affect a delicate balance between communicating reassurance about Australia as a country of resettlement and addressing the expectations refugees have of the lifestyles of people in developed countries. It appears that this could be enhanced by including more detailed information about the standard of living new entrants might expect in the early years of settlement and the particular issues faced by communities in each state.

The research participants were asked to nominate the information they felt, from their experience of settlement, was most important to include in official information sessions for refugees about to come to Tasmania. There was some discussion about whether it was possible to provide information which gave people a more informed choice between Tasmania and other states with better labour market opportunities as the place of settlement. It was suggested that Tasmania be promoted to refugees who were not looking for work, but as an ideal destination for those who wished to focus on learning English or getting an education for themselves or their children.

The suggestions most repeatedly put forward by the research participants for inclusion in the programme were:

- Information about their destination, both the name of the actual destination and where it is to be found on a map.
- Information about Tasmania's cool climate, including warnings about the mental effects of prolonged cold.
- Information about the affordable housing crisis in Australia. Specifically, that new arrivals will be in transitional housing briefly, that a first, possibly impermanent house will be found for them but that after that it is their own responsibility to find housing and that it is very difficult to do so.
- Accurate information about the unemployment rate among refugee communities in Tasmania: the message that it is very difficult to get work in Tasmania.
- Accurate information about racism in Australia. Rather than being told that Australia is a friendly country, people should be told that the responses of Australians to refugee communities range from friendly to hostile.
- Accurate information about the cost of living, including utilities, and a realistic view of the standard of living available to new entrants.
- Good recommendations about the education system for children and adults.
- Information on the number of people from their community/language group who will be living in their vicinity.
- A warning about the mental stress of cultural adjustment and settlement.

R1: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensure that the Australian Cultural Orientation Program is reviewed to include accurate information about the housing, employment, and cost of living characteristics of low income Australians in each jurisdiction.

R2: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship employ Australians who have settled in this country as refugees to deliver the pre-embarkation orientation in refugee camps.

Services in transit

It is understood by DIAC and the IOM that the support provided to refugees in transit to resettlement and the greeting they receive at the airport on arrival has an enormous psychological

impact on them and therefore services are funded to do this work. While this system had failed for only a very small number of the research participants the impact had been devastating and set a tone of insecurity and abandonment for their early settlement phase.

R3: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship fund an evaluation of the delivery of transit support services to ensure that these services are being delivered to the highest standard of client support.

IHSS Services

Anglicare's research found that new entrants are finding that while the settlement service system is largely meeting their needs in areas such as health and initial cultural and practical orientation it has two fundamental problems: it is not providing sustainable housing outcomes and its support is of too short a duration.

The Australian Government has acknowledged that some refugees need an intensive level of support which the IHSS providers cannot currently provide (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006). In the last Federal Budget, the Government allocated $35.2 million to establish a Complex Case Support Network which will deliver specialised and intensive case management to humanitarian entrants with complex needs. There is no clarity yet as to what this model will look like, how it will integrate with existing IHSS and SGP services or how many humanitarian entrants will have access to the services.

Tasmania's settlement services remain relatively integrated due to the small pool of potential providers in this state. Anglicare's research suggests that the problem for new entrants comes if they are exited from case management too prematurely. The research found that new entrants require specialist and skilled providers of services and that making the transition from settlement services to mainstream services before people are sufficiently self-reliant is confusing and distressing for them.

R4: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensures that the new contracts for Complex Case Support Network are tied to IHSS contracts and are delivered by IHSS providers.

Proposers and support to Special Humanitarian Program Entrants

Anglicare's research identified gaps in the assistance provided to people proposing people to come to Australia through the SHP. These included assistance to provide on-arrival accommodation if required, and for more support in providing orientation services - such as support for SHP entrants to access health services or to navigate the private rental market and assist with bond and rent in advance. There is also a need for SHP entrants to get access to financial counselling services to assist them to manage the debts. IHSS services can provide emergency accommodation for SHP entrants on a needs basis but this requires negotiations with DIAC.

The Australian Government has acknowledged that SHP arrivals are in need of a greater level of settlement support. The approach that is being mooted is to establish a set of minimum requirements for proposers. At the time of writing it is suggested that these will include a minimum period of employment, a minimum period of residence, completion of financial literacy training and limits on the frequency of proposals (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006). A budget initiative has been announced to provide support to proposers who do not meet the required levels of employment or length or residency. These people will be required to find a volunteer or community group who are prepared to provide the settlement support.

These announcements suggest a shift to prioritising applications from longer term and employed proposers. The affect this will have on people proposing family members who fail to meet these new requirements is worrying, particularly for refugees settled in areas with higher levels of unemployment with no specialist Job Network providers, such as Tasmania. It also has potential to impact unfairly on newly arrived families separated in the resettlement process, women-headed households where women are

busy with childcare responsibilities, students, and refugees who have health problems which restrict their work capacity. Concerns are also being expressed about the capacity of the voluntary sector to provide settlement support for SHP entrants – proposers may find it difficult to find volunteers or community groups willing to take on the role (RCOA, 2006b). In Canada, a review of the impact of barring family sponsorship if the sponsor is receiving social assistance revealed the devastating impact of such policies, even where they exist within a progressive legislative framework (CCR, 2004).

R5: That proposers of SHP entrants are assessed for their capacity to provide on-arrival accommodation by IHSS providers prior to the arrival of SHP entrants, and that access to on-arrival accommodation by IHSS providers is provided where necessary.

R6: That funding to IHSS services is increased to enable them to provide the full range of orientation services to all SHP entrants.

The Adult Migrant English Program

Anglicare's research found that some refugees struggled with the limitations of an English program which must embrace enormous diversity of skill and educational attainment. However, a strong theme of the findings was a very positive view of the Adult Migrant English Program and its teachers. The challenges for that Program identified in this research were in linking students to the community through work placements or volunteering opportunities to give them exposure to English in Australian workplaces. Participants in this research also identified a desperate need for a vocational pathway beyond English language classes that could also include ongoing English tuition. This was consistent with DIAC's recommendation that an effective response for refugee job seekers is combining work or vocational training with targeted English language support (DIMIA, 2003b: 123).

R7: That the Commonwealth Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations provide funding to Tasmanian AMEP providers to develop a pilot project to develop vocational opportunities with on-site English tuition.

Education for refugee children

Anglicare's research found that refugee communities believe that Tasmania's education system is responsive to their own and their children's needs, and widespread satisfaction was expressed with the educational outcomes they were witnessing for their children. The young people interviewed for this project who had entered the school system as secondary and senior secondary students identified a gap in transitional support for young people leaving senior secondary schools in the independent school system.

R8: That the Association of Independent Schools and the Catholic Education Office review the pathway planning support provided to senior secondary students from refugee communities with a view to providing best practice support in the transition into further education or training.

Transport

Transport disadvantage is strongly associated with social status as transport plays a critical role in providing access to economic opportunities and social and community services (Dodson et al, 2004). In the course of Anglicare's research into poverty, mental illness, unemployment, housing, and financial crisis, the difficulties caused by lack of access to affordable transport have been a common concern. For example, in Anglicare's research with 812 people experiencing financial crisis, almost one third (31%) of respondents identified car and transport costs as a big or very big problem (Madden, 2004). Those living in non-metropolitan areas were the most likely to

identify these costs as a major issue with 41% of respondents ranking car and transport costs as a big or very big problem for their household (Madden, 2004).

Anglicare's research demonstrated that participants found the public transport system difficult to navigate in the early phase of settlement and that it did not meet their transport needs generally and especially in relation to accessing workplaces. Many Tasmanians are dependent on private cars for transport and face the high costs associated with this. In common with other disadvantaged trainee drivers, new entrants are having enormous difficulties getting the 50 hours driving experience required to apply for a provisional licence and to get the skilled tuition they need to pass the driving test. More support is required for initiatives that aim to assist them to do this, both in the form of some increased access to cars and a larger pool of properly supported and trained volunteer driving instructors. This should include appropriate cultural diversity training.

R9: That the Tasmanian Minister for Health and Human Services provide 'one-off' funding to be used to purchase more cars for the driving training initiatives being run through settlement services.

R10: That the Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources ensure that funds are directed through the Community Road Safety Partnerships program to run a programme recruiting and training volunteers to be driving instructors for the driver training initiatives.

Employment

This report identifies a number of issues in relation to employment for refugees in Tasmania. The issues identified by the research participants were the lack of networks typical of new communities, their disrupted educations or lack of recognised qualifications, their difficulties with the Job Network system, incidents of discrimination against them by employers, and the erosion of their self confidence caused by their failure to find work. Interviewees who had made the transition into the labour market were concentrated in unskilled or semi-skilled work which was mainly seasonal and casual.

The settlement of refugees in regional areas requires policies that support long-term settlement, including the development of vigorous regional economies to ensure pathways into employment. Stanovic and Taylor argue that a key goal for refugee settlement should be to both promote informed choice for the refugees and to ensure advance planning and capacity building in areas of resettlement, in consultation with appropriate refugee groups (Stanovic and Taylor, 2005: 57).

R11: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration ensure that there is appropriate consultation and planning conducted in partnership with the Tasmanian Government around the settlement of refugees in regional areas.

Participants in Anglicare's research discussed at length their ideas for the development of specialist employment programmes for refugee communities which would have an emphasis on networking with employers. Their ideas included charitable NGOs using their professional and community/church networks to network with employers and link jobseekers from new communities to work opportunities. They thought that such a specialist service could also provide training for job-seekers based on feedback from employers on skills gaps among

refugee applicants. One group of interviewees were part of a new community group which had formed their own unofficial 'job agency' which they hoped to use as a mechanism for such networking.

The benefits of specialist employment services for refugee jobseekers have been raised in research on regional refugee settlement (Stanovic and Taylor, 2005). They have also been identified by service providers in submissions to DIAC (DIMIA, 2003b), and by labour market research (Kyle et al, 2004). An evaluation of labour market programmes which have specifically targeted assistance for refugees has found that these services use an holistic approach to working with refugees (they have partnerships with other agencies and/or link with other service providers such as language and counselling services), they take time to understand individual needs, they provide long-term services, they have good relationships with employers and offer work experience and support for workers in the workplace. The benefits of these services are that they understand cultural differences and the needs of refugee groups, they employ multi-lingual workers, they have close relationships with employers, especially employers who are from non-English speaking backgrounds, they link up with relevant services and they provide information in an appropriate way about industrial relations, income support, taxation etc. Most importantly, they produce better outcomes for clients and are more cost effective than Job Network Intensive Assistance (Kyle et al, 2004).

R12: That the Commonwealth Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations provides funding to the Job Network in Tasmania to develop a specialised labour market programme for culturally and linguistically diverse communities to be delivered in Launceston and Hobart. This service will provide individual pathways planning, case management and referral, training, work experience and mentoring.

Anglicare's research found that both the lack of qualifications and the lack of recognition of overseas qualifications is making entry into the workforce difficult for people from refugee communities in Tasmania.

R13: That the Tasmanian Minister for Education makes funds available to assist entry into courses at TAFE and UTAS for members of refugee communities to assist them to gain training and qualifications.

Recent research suggests that discrimination by employers is playing a greater role in recruitment of workers than had been previously thought (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). The Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner provides training in recruitment and selection practices which focuses on the obligations of employers under the Anti-Discrimination Act. However, a training package needs to be developed for Tasmanian employers which highlights the social and economic value of a culturally diverse workforce, and the cultural assumptions which distort the application of the merit principle in employment processes. Encouragement also needs to be given to the development of ethnic diversity statistics by larger employers in Tasmania.

R14: That the Tasmanian Attorney General direct funds to the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner to develop a public education campaign for employers around the following issues: the impact of cultural assumptions on recruitment practices and the value of a culturally diverse workforce.

Level and source of income

Many of the participants interviewed were dependent on the social security system for their income. Concern about the inadequacy of these payments was expressed, as participants identified their difficulties in meeting essential costs such as rental, transport, food and heating costs. Austudy payments provided an inadequate level of support for those participants who were attempting to pursue education and training, which, when combined with their enormous difficulty in finding part-time work, was a factor driving them out of education.

Enormous inequities exist within the social security system between payment types meaning that people in similar circumstances can be on markedly different incomes. Newstart Allowance and Austudy payment are well below pensions such as Disability Support Payment and Parent Payment. Financial hardship is also caused by the drop in income for families when their child turns 16. The community sector has long argued that income support payments be adjusted so that allowances are brought into line with pensions and therefore linked to Average Male Weekly Earnings.

R15: That the Commonwealth Government through the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs increase Newstart and Austudy payments to the level of pension payments.

Participants expressed anxiety about having their Centrelink income suspended. Many of them were unclear as to how and in what circumstances this might happen but the fear that their only source of financial support might be removed was repeatedly voiced. Research has found that the impact of activity requirements and their associated sanctions are likely to exacerbate disadvantage, particularly among people who have less access to family and educational social supports (see for example Kerr and Savelsberg, 2003). *The Report of the Independent Review of Breaches and Penalties in the Social Security System* recommended that consideration be given to an activity test exemption to "especially vulnerable jobseekers" "who are likely to experience difficulties in receiving, understanding or being able to comply with official communications that require attendance at interviews, notification of information or other obligations" (Pearce et al, 2002; 25).

R16: That the Commonwealth Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs ensure that humanitarian entrants and special humanitarian program entrants be identified by Centrelink as "especially vulnerable jobseekers" and that they consequently be given activity test exemption.

Cost of living

Anglicare's research has found that the cost of living for refugee families and individuals in Tasmania is high and difficult to manage on low fixed incomes. This is due to a combination of housing costs (high rental costs, and locational disadvantage which results in high transport costs), high fuel costs (large electricity bills which are difficult to manage with high fixed costs and a cool climate), health problems and difficulties finding work. Cost of living issues are exacerbated by the imperative to send money to their loved ones who are in refugee camps or countries of first asylum, vulnerability as consumers to poor business practices and a need for assistance with financial literacy and budgeting skills.

R17: That the Commonwealth Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs fund the Commonwealth Financial Counselling Program (CFCP) in Tasmania to develop and provide financial literacy training and budget planning skills to refugee communities in partnership with settlement services.

Difficulties in shopping were repeatedly cited by the research participants as a problem, both in terms of cost and accessibility. This was exacerbated for families by their need to purchase large volumes of bulky food items such as oils, pulses, and flours, and their difficulties in getting access to transport.

R18: That Tasmanian Government funds the development of a refugee food cooperative in Hobart and Launceston under the auspices of a Settlement Grants Program provider. Further, that these cooperatives are linked to a transport strategy to assist households to transport their groceries home.

Housing

Safe, secure, permanent housing is critical for the settlement process. However, Anglicare's research has found that housing is a major problem for refugees in Tasmania, with many research participants reporting being forced to move frequently because of problems with affordability, incidents of discrimination in the private rental market, and even experiences of homelessness, all of which undermine their chances of a successful settlement. The provision of shelter to refugees is arguably part of Australia's humanitarian obligation to settlement, yet the Department of Immigration and Citizenship makes no particular assistance to housing provision for refugees beyond a short period in On-Arrival Accommodation and assistance to negotiate the private rental market during the period of intensive case management. This is assistance with transition into the private rental market is described as finding long-term accommodation. However, the findings of this and other research show that it is short-term and insecure.

After exiting the IHSS, refugees are entitled only to the general supports available to all low income Australians – Commonwealth Rent Assistance if they procure a house in the private rental market; public housing if they meet highly targeted criteria designed to assist those deemed to be most at need due to health, age or experiences of family violence; the Supported Accommodation Assistance Programme if they are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and particular programmes funded through the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. However, it is clear that due to the particular cultural and linguistic challenges they face and their poverty of resources (both in terms of information and practical resources such as money and transport), they can be effectively excluded from using these services. Anglicare urges the Federal Government to complete the suite of services provided through the IHSS and address the crisis in housing in refugee communities.

R19: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship direct funding to Housing Tasmania to construct or purchase properties for refugee individuals and families, to be managed by settlement services as community tenancies.

Refugee clients need more intensive support, including support to learn tenancy skills, in addition to transport and interpretation support. Complex contractual and legal information must be conveyed in a meaningful way to people who may have cultural, linguistic and literacy barriers to understanding. There are major additional costs to services in hiring interpreters.

Anglicare's research suggests that refugees need specialist assistance to negotiate their way through the private rental market and that without it they are vulnerable to homelessness or to living with the imminent threat of homelessness. There are services which should be able to assist refugees but because of funding restraints are currently finding it difficult to provide the level of support that is required.

Through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), the State and Federal Government fund services to provide accommodation case planning and transitional support to people who are dealing with a range of issues **that contribute to not having stable and secure housing**. These can include **social isolation**, language or cultural **barriers**, or **family/relationship breakdown**. SAAP services provide assessment, support, information and referral, arranging emergency accommodation, brokering goods, support or accommodation as required, and developing a case plan to support the client to move on from crisis. The escalating housing crisis is placing these services under considerable pressure. Anglicare's case planning and support service in northern Tasmania is approached by up to 20 new clients a day experiencing homelessness or imminent homelessness. Currently the level of support required for these clients is not sustainable and thus many clients are experiencing difficulties establishing and maintaining stable long term accommodation.

Anglicare estimates that an additional four full time equivalent (FTE) positions, spread across the state, are required to alleviate some of the pressure on accommodation case planning and support services and estimates that this will cost $333,000 per annum. These funds would enable the employment of additional staff across the north-west, north and south (.5 FTE in the north-west, 1 FTE in the north and 2.5 FTE in the south).

R20: That the Tasmanian Minister for Health and Human services provides an additional $333,000 per annum to accommodation case planning and support services across the state to enable the employment of an additional 4 FTE housing support workers. Within this staffing increase Anglicare recommends that 1.5 FTE positions be dedicated to work with refugee communities: .5FTE in Launceston and 1FTE in Hobart

Anglicare's research further reveals a high level of transience in the housing market for refugee families. Numerous stories were recounted of push and pull factors across the housing market which contribute to this. Their narratives included problems with repairs left undone, imminent eviction, condition reports not completed, a lack of information about their rights and responsibilities as tenants, and a general feeling of exploitation. These stories highlighted the vulnerability of new entrants as tenants in the market place. The State Government funds the statewide Private Rental Tenancy Support Service (PRTSS) to assist vulnerable tenants with problems such as these, however currently this service prioritises young single people, older single people and single parent families in its case load. This service is also only funded until March 2008; ongoing funding for its core service delivery is required. Further funding is also required for this service to extend its service and enable it to deliver the specialist service needed for refugee communities. These communities require intensive tenancy training and some groups need support to learn tenancy skills. Anglicare estimates that an additional 2.5 FTE equivalent positions are required within the PRTSS services to work with refugee communities (1FTE in the north and 1.5FTE in the south) and that the cost of this would be $208,000 per annum.

R21: That the Tasmanian Minister for Health and Human Services provides ongoing funding to the Private Rental Tenancy Support Service and that an additional $208,000 per annum is allocated to the PRTSS to enable the employment of an additional 2.5FTE tenancy support workers in Hobart and Launceston dedicated to work with refugee communities.

Anglicare's research reveals that refugee communities in Tasmania feel they are subjected to active discrimination in the housing market. This is consistent with the findings of research into housing issues in other jurisdictions (eg Beer and Foley, 2003; MRRHAP, 2007). Many participants reported maintenance problems with their rental properties and difficulties in getting landlords to attend to these. Many also reported unreasonable rent increases. Tasmania has been identified by the National Association of Tenant Organisations as the state most deficient in its legislation to protect renters from unreasonable rent increases (ABC, 2006). In recent years Tasmania has experienced some of the biggest rent increases in the country but there is no legislative mechanism to protect tenants from unfair rent increases. Currently the only option open for a tenant wishing to challenge a rent increase is court action.

This research suggests that active steps need to be taken to ensure that landlords are required to provide safe, secure and well maintained housing and to regulate to ensure that rent increases in Tasmania are reasonable.

R22: That the Tasmanian Attorney General order a review of the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 to incorporate a method of determining reasonable rent increases and to ensure that landlords perform maintenance promptly.

A current Victorian project has highlighted the potential outcomes of positively networking with real estate agents on behalf of refugee clients. The project focuses on developing networks and delivering workshops with local real estate agents to increase their understanding of the housing and settlement needs of migrant and refugee families. Preliminary research found that real estate agents felt that refugee families were seen as good potential tenants when they promptly completed paper work, provided good references, and had a case worker present who was able to advocate for them. The real estate agents identified language barriers, a lack of rental and employment histories, and problems communicating about maintenance and repair issues as their biggest concerns with refugee tenants. They also identified their lack of access to free interpreting services and lack of knowledge of support services as their own biggest problems in dealing with refugee tenants (MRRHAP, 2007).

R23: That the Tasmanian Attorney General, through the Office of Consumer Affairs, and the Tasmanian Minister for Heath and Human Services jointly fund a 12 month project which would aim to develop and deliver community education material for real estate agents on the issues faced by refugee communities. This project would be run through the Private Rental Tenancy Support Services.

R24: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship make members of the Real Estate Institutes eligible for free use of the Telephone Interpreter Service.

IHSS service providers confront difficult and resource intensive issues in the first weeks of settlement support. A strategic response is required to the issue of new refugee entrants arriving at night or on weekends when services are not open (escalating operational costs for IHSS services), and the concerns of IHSS providers about their duty of care to new arrivals who are at risk due to critical health problems on arrival, lack of familiarity with electricity and the safe handling of electrical appliances, and who are unable to contact emergency services unaided.

R25: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship direct funding to ensure that on-arrival accommodation is provided in Hobart and Launceston in a well serviced, purpose built or converted multi-family facility with a 24-hour support worker housed on site. This would enable both more cost-efficient orientation of new entrants by IHSS services and enable them to ensure a safe environment for new arrivals in the first month after arrival.

Health

Anglicare's research found that in spite of the complex and chronic health conditions experienced by people from refugee backgrounds, the participants in Anglicare's research felt that the public health system was responding well to their needs. This may be in large part be due to the State Government funded initiatives to address the particular and specialist health requirements of this population – The Refugee and Humanitarian Arrivals Clinic in Hobart and the clinic for refugees offered through the Migrant Resource Centre in Launceston. These specialist clinics do not exist in all jurisdictions. The Refugee Council of Australia has urged the Commonwealth Government to make funding available to ensure the viability of these specialist medical clinics. This is important, given the centrality of addressing health concerns as part of the early settlement experience.

R26: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship direct funds to support the cost of the Tasmanian Department of Health in the Refugee Health Clinics in Hobart and Launceston.

Family reunion

The Special Humanitarian Programme is a major source of family reunion for refugee communities and family reunion is a significant part of the settlement process. However, Anglicare's research has found that there are ongoing problems for refugees in Tasmania in relation to the processing of Special Humanitarian Program applications in this state.

Anglicare's research has found that some of the distress with the application process for the SHP is related to proposers receiving inadequate information from DIAC about the progress of their applications or the reasons for failed applications; poor access to appropriate and non-fee charging migration advice; differing cultural understandings of family and the importance of responsibilities to extended family; and a mismatch between entrants expectations of family reunion and the constraints of the SHP. These findings reflect those of RCOA's evaluation of the lodgement and processing of SHP applications (2006a).

While DIAC nationally receives substantially more requests for places in the SHP than it is able to provide, it does appear that Tasmania is less successful than other states in the application process and that within Tasmania, some of the new communities are far less successful than others. The reasons for this could be related to the situation of the 'person of concern' in the refugee source country, with people being prioritised in response to the level of risk they face, or it could relate to the 'quality' of the applications in terms of the accuracy of the information provided. This raises questions about the support available to communities in Tasmania to make applications. Assistance is provided by DIAC in the form of a migration lawyer who works under the auspices of the Migrant

Resource Centre (north) and provides a state-wide service. However, research participants, service providers and volunteers all report that this service is not accessible due to the high level of demand for it, and cannot give the close support required to make a successful application. It is the belief of service providers and volunteers that proposers need assistance with all stages of the application process including filling out forms, ensuring consistency of information for Australian authorities, assistance to contact countries of origin or first asylum to track information, and assistance to navigate the process.

R27: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensures that funds are provided to extend the migration advice service provided free of cost through the Settlement Grants Programme, to ensure that 1FTE Migration Agent is available to refugee communities in Hobart.

R28: That DIAC develop a communication strategy which will allow proposers to make telephone enquiries about the progress of their applications and will ensure they are given feedback on the reasons for rejection.

R29: Anglicare, in support of the Refugee Council of Australia, further recommends that DIAC conduct consultations with refugee communities to review their definition of family and ensure that a new, culturally appropriate version is reflected in DIAC policies and procedures.

R30: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensure that there be a separate allocation of spaces in the humanitarian program for the purpose of family reunion for humanitarian entrants and that this does not impact on the overall humanitarian program quota.

R31: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensures that funds are provided so that DIAC pay the travel costs of reunions of immediate family and dependent members of extended families (including stepchildren, adopted children and orphaned children of siblings and elderly parents who have no remaining carers) and that a HECS-style debt recovery system is investigated with travel loans repaid on receipt of a pre-determined level of income.

Racism

Incidents of racist violence and harassment can have an impact on refugee communities which go far beyond their immediate victims. Emerging research is suggesting that refugees from the African sub-continent are sometimes experiencing extreme forms of racism in Australia (Bartolomei & Eckert, 2004 in Pittaway, 2004).

In terms of victim impact, the consequences of neighbourhood harassment and vandalism are enormous. Incidents of harassment can reinvoke traumatic memories for survivors of war and other abuses. Being told that anti-social behaviour is being perpetrated by groups of youth must hold particular fears for people coming from conflicts in which children are forced to perpetrate the worst atrocities. Research participants expressed a need to have their concerns heard, to have support as victims of crime and to have the efforts being made to stop the anti-social behaviour communicated effectively to them. This is difficult in a context in which many are fearful of police and may be having their own problems with Australian legal systems around issues such as traffic violations.

Tasmania Police have made efforts to break down barriers with refugee communities, including the appointment of senior officers as Multicultural Liaison Officers. Their efforts include a comprehensive training system for new recruits in the use of interpreters and the issues around religious and racial diversity, and the production

of multilingual resources to assist police. A range of strategies are also being used by police to try and explain the legal system to new entrants, including numerous talks to community groups. However, significant difficulties remain in communicating the application of the law to new communities and in explaining what is required for a perpetrator to be charged with a crime.

A Department of Justice funded project which aimed to identify the optimum ways of getting information about the Safe At Home Legislation to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities identified the key information needs for these communities including the style of information to be communicated and the process in which the message is developed. Multiple information strategies also need to be employed to ensure that information about reporting harassment, vandalism and assaults and the support available to victims of these incidents is available to not just refugee communities, but all culturally and linguistically diverse communities. An appropriate body to oversee the development of strategies that would build on established initiatives by Tasmania Police would be the Crime Prevention Community Safety Council, a council representing Government, business and the community which aims to develop partnerships between community and government to focus on crime prevention and is chaired by the Commissioner of Police.

R32: That the Commissioner of Police be asked to place the issue of anti-social behaviour directed at culturally and linguistically diverse communities on the agenda of the Crime Prevention Community Safety Council.

R33: That the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Citizenship ensure that funds are allocated to develop community education programs focused on developing positive images about refugees. The programme should also explain the role of the offshore humanitarian program and the background of the refugees who come to Australia through it.

R34: That the Tasmanian Minister for Education encourages educators to apply for Harmony Day Funding to promote initiatives focused on developing positive images about refugees. The programme should also explain the role of the offshore humanitarian program and the background of the refugees who come to Australia through it. Schools which do not have students from refugee backgrounds should particularly be encouraged to apply for funds to introduce their student populations to these issues.

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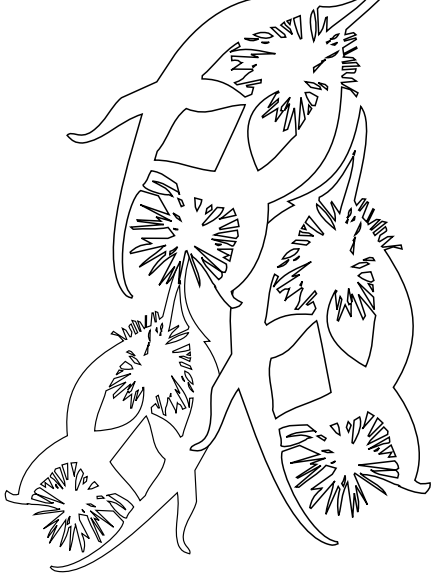

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