

Information Sheet

Humanitarian Youth Arrivals to Australia July 2013–June 2014

Introduction

1.1 The MYAN

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

1.2 Background

This Information Sheet provides an overview of the settlement trends for young people from refugee backgrounds in Australia between July 2013 and June 2014. It also includes a brief overview of some of the issues facing young people of migrant and refugee background during the settlement process. These issues have been identified by MYAN through its national policy and advocacy work. This Information Sheet can be read in conjunction with the MYAN (Australia) Humanitarian Youth Arrivals to Australia July 2008–June 2013 (www.myan.org.au/resources-and-publications/121/).

The information presented here is derived from statistics collated by the Department of Social Services (DSS) based on the records of people arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian Programme¹ as at 9 July 2014. Statistics have been sourced from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's (DIBP) online Settlement Reporting Facility (SRF), which primarily uses on-arrival data supplemented by data from the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), Medicare and other relevant sources.

It is important to note that:

- The term 'young people' refers to those aged between 12 to 24 years – data available through SRF only allows a breakdown of 12–24 years;
- Data displayed as 'year of arrival' was extracted from the SRF on 9 July 2014 and all data presented is accurate as at this date;
- Many young people and their families move between states in the months and years after first arriving in Australia. The data presented here reflects

¹ The Humanitarian Programme is comprised of two components – the Onshore and Offshore Programmes. The onshore protection/asylum component fulfils Australia's international obligations by offering protection to people already in Australia who are found to be refugees according to the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The offshore resettlement component expresses Australia's commitment to refugee protection by going beyond these obligations and offering resettlement to people overseas for whom this is the most appropriate option (refer to DIBP FactSheet - <https://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/60refugee.htm#b>). While changes have recently occurred to the visa sub-classes within the Onshore Programme, for the period covered by this Info Sheet, successful applicants were granted an 866 visa.

young people residing in these states as at 9 July 2014. Given the mobility of many newly arrived young people and the challenges of maintaining up-to-date data in this area, the data provided in this Information Sheet should be considered as a guide only;

- The statistics refer to financial years and not calendar years;
- The visa sub-classes included in this Information Sheet are 200; 201; 202; 203; 204; and 866².

After arriving in Australia, young people move for a variety of reason, including:

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

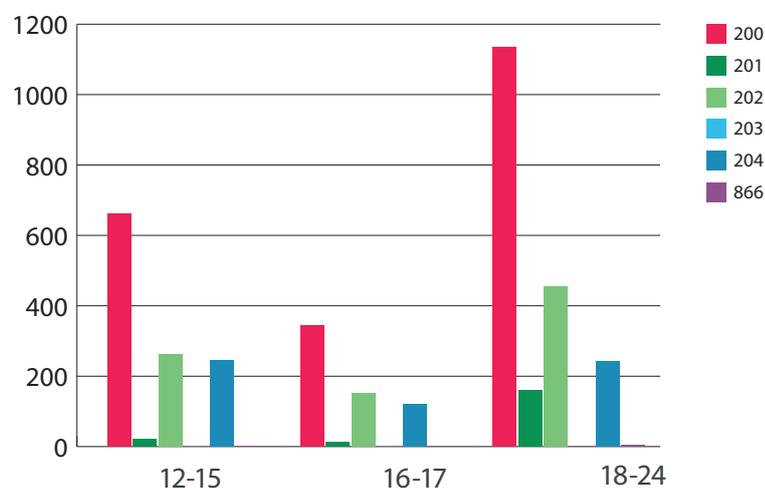
2. Arrival numbers, country of birth and settlement locations

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

Figures 1 and 2 present the numbers of humanitarian youth arrivals between 2012–2013 and 2013–2014. 3817 young people aged between 12 and 24 years arrived in Australia through the Humanitarian Programme between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2014 – comprising approximately 29% of the total number (13,192) of humanitarian arrivals in this period.

This represents an 8.8% increase in the number of young people arriving in Australia through this Programme from the 2012–2013 year – 3,478 young people in the 2012–2013 financial year, compared with 3,817 young people during the 2013–2014 financial year.

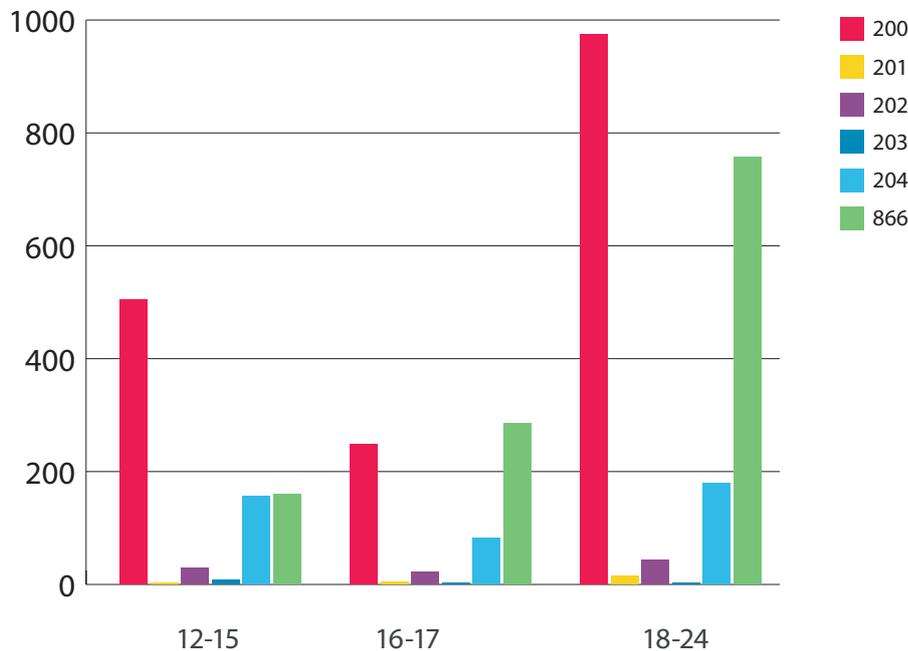
Figure 1: Number of humanitarian arrivals aged 12 to 24 years between 2013–2014 by visa category³



² Although there are other visa sub-classes through which young people may arrive in Australia with refugee-like experiences (i.e. 117 visa, Orphan Relative, and 115 visa, Remaining Relative) the above visa sub-classes are the only visas available under the Humanitarian Programme. For more information on the visa sub-classes referred to in this Information Sheet, see <http://www.immi.gov.au/visas/humanitarian/offshore/visas.htm>

³ For more information on arrivals during 2008 – 2013, see the MYAN Humanitarian Youth Arrivals Information Sheet 2008 – 2013

Figure 2: Number of humanitarian arrivals aged 12 to 24 years between 2012–2013 by visa category*



Figures 1 and 2 reflect a significant decrease in the number of young people arriving in Australia on visa sub-class 866 in the space of one year across all age categories. It also highlights the increased numbers of young people arriving on visa sub-class 200 and 202 between the 2012–2013 and 2013–2014 financial years.

Of the 3,817 youth arrivals in 2013–2014, approximately 0.13% arrived through the Onshore Programme, under the visa 866. This represents a significant decrease in the number of young people arriving through the Onshore Programme when compared to the 2008–2013 financial years⁴. On the other hand 99.8% of young people arriving in Australia arrived through the Offshore Programme in 2013–2014.

These figures reflect a marked decrease in the number of young people aged between 12 and 24 on visa sub-class 866. In 2012–2013, young people on visa sub-class 866 represented 35% (1,203 of the 3,478 young people) of the total intake through the Humanitarian Programme. During the 2013–2014 financial year, only 5 young people aged between 12 and 24 arrived on visa 866. This reflects the decrease in numbers of boat arrivals in the previous 12 months and the broader government policy changes regarding asylum seekers.

2.2 Where are young people from refugee backgrounds coming from?

Country of Birth

Table 1 presents the numbers of humanitarian youth arrivals by country of birth and age. Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran were the top 3 countries of birth for young arrivals,

⁴ Please note as Figure 2 shows, the numbers of young people arriving on 201 and 203 visas are very small. The total number for 201 visa sub-class in 2012–2013 is 23 and for the 203 visa sub-class, the total number is 12.

⁵ For more information on arrivals during 2008 – 2013, see the MYAN Humanitarian Youth arrivals Information Sheet 2008 – 2013

accounting for over 50% or 2,102 of young people arriving to Australia in 2013–2014 through the Humanitarian Programme. Young people from these countries represent the largest number of arrivals within the Humanitarian Programme during the 2013–2014 financial year.

Table 1: Country of Birth⁶ numbers of youth arrivals between 2013 and 2014 by age group

| Country of Birth (Settlement) | Age on Arrival | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 12-15 | 16-17 | 18-24 | Total |
| Afghanistan | 174 | 138 | 553 | 865 |
| Iraq | 217 | 121 | 438 | 776 |
| Iran | 182 | 65 | 214 | 461 |
| Burma | 104 | 65 | 214 | 386 |
| Thailand | 93 | 30 | 52 | 175 |
| Pakistan | 104 | 40 | 28 | 172 |
| Nepal | 65 | 39 | 67 | 171 |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | 64 | 23 | 69 | 156 |
| Syria | 45 | 33 | 75 | 153 |
| Somalia | 36 | 16 | 61 | 113 |
| Total | 1048 | 570 | 1774 | 3428 |

These figures also reflect some of the circumstances experienced by young people arriving in Australia through the Humanitarian Programme. Many will have spent significant periods of time in transit countries, with some young people being born in a second country – e.g. many humanitarian youth arrivals from Burma were born or have spent a significant amount of time in Thailand before resettling in Australia and many from Afghanistan may have spent time or lived much of their life in Pakistan or Iran, sometimes in refugee camp environments.

2.3 Where are refugee young people settling in Australia?

Table 2: Number of young people aged 12 to 24 arriving in Australia between 2013–2014 by state and age group

| Age on Arrival | State | | | | | | | | Total |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | ACT | NSW | NT | QLD | SA | TAS | VIC | WA | |
| 12-15 | 15 | 304 | 10 | 229 | 147 | 93 | 333 | 59 | 1190 |
| 16-17 | 9 | 178 | 4 | 113 | 73 | 44 | 179 | 30 | 630 |
| 18-24 | 21 | 634 | 8 | 319 | 196 | 92 | 576 | 150 | 1997 |
| Total | 45 | 1116 | 22 | 661 | 416 | 229 | 1088 | 239 | 3817 |

⁶ It is important to note that 'Country of Birth' does not necessarily reflect cultural background. For example, young people born in Thailand who arrive in Australia through the Humanitarian Programme are Karen, Karenni or Kayan from Burma; similarly, the cultural background of those born in Pakistan may be Hazara, Pashtun or Tajik (whose family are originally from Afghanistan), and some may also be Pakistani. (Settlement Information Support Team, Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), 2012).

Table 2 presents the number of young people aged 12-24 arriving in Australia between July 2013 and June 2014 by state and age breakdown. New South Wales and Victoria have the highest settlement numbers overall, followed by Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

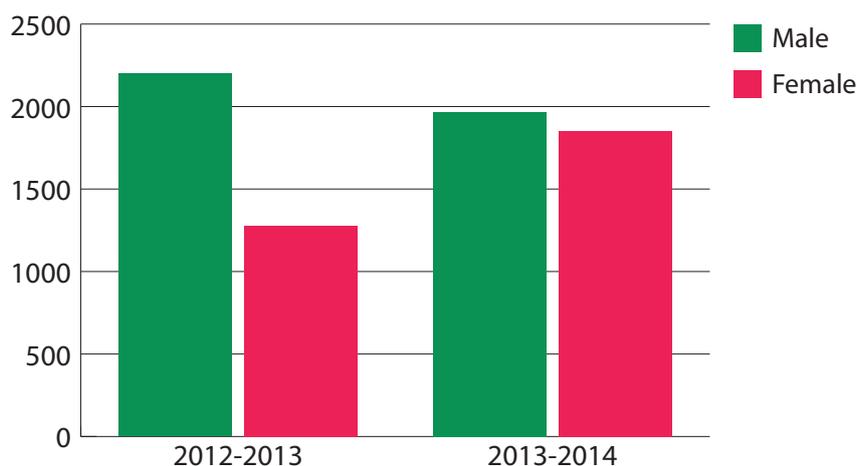
Of the humanitarian youth entrants arriving in Australia during 2013–2014, 1,116 settled in New South Wales and 1,088 settled in Victoria. These two states have consistently been the highest settlement states and combined, have settled approximately 58% of young people aged 12 to 24 in 2013–2014.

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

3.1 Gender

Figure 3 presents the number of humanitarian youth arrivals between 2012–2013 and 2013–2014 by gender. Just over half (1,967 or 52%) of the 3,817 of humanitarian youth arrivals to Australia are young men, while young women account for 48% (1,850 people) of arrivals. Even though the overall number of young people arriving through the Humanitarian Programme has increased during the 2013–2014 financial year, the percentage of young men decreased in comparison to the 2012–2013 financial year. In the 2012–2013 financial year young men accounted for 63% (or 2,199 of 3,478 arrivals) while young women accounted for 36%.

Figure 3: Number of young people aged 12 to 24 arriving in Australia between 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 by gender

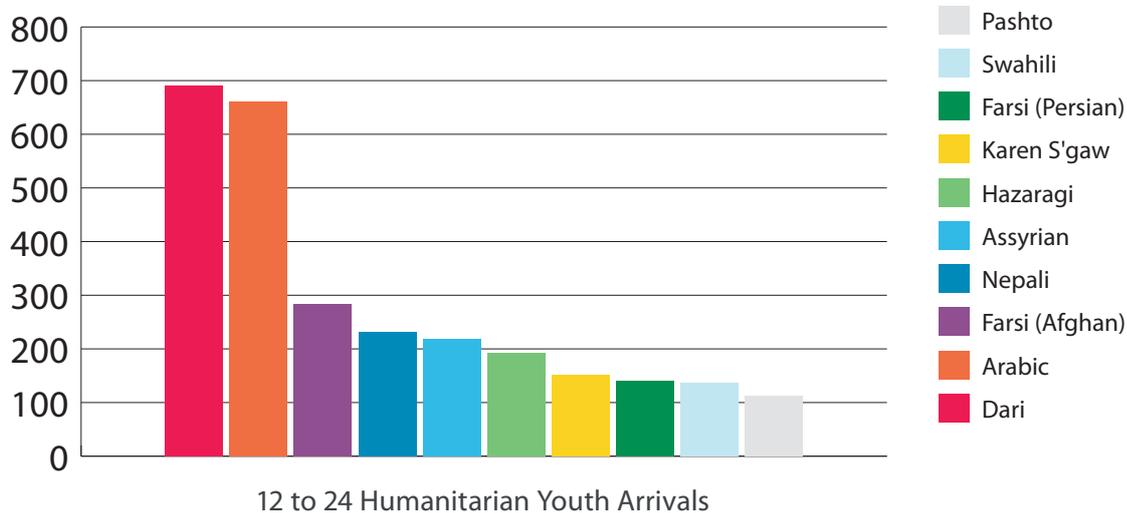


3.2 Languages spoken

Figure 4 presents the top 10 languages spoken by humanitarian youth arrivals between 2013 and 2014. Figure 4 reflects that Dari is the most widely spoken language (excluding English) of the 3,817 young people aged 12 to 24 arriving in Australia during the 2013–2014 financial year. Dari accounts for 18% or 691 young

people, and is followed closely by Arabic (17.4%); Farsi (Afghan) (7%); Nepali (6.07%); and Assyrian (5.7%).

Figure 4: Top 10 languages spoken by humanitarian youth arrivals during 2013–2014



The majority of the top 10 languages reflect the top 3 countries of birth – Dari, Arabic, Farsi, (Afghan), Assyrian, Hazaragi, and Farsi (Persian) are spoken by those from Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran, as well as from Pakistan and Syria. As such, these figures also reflect the high numbers of young people arriving from Iraq (where Arabic and Assyrian are spoken), Afghanistan (where Dari, Farsi (Afghan), Pashto and Hazaragi are spoken), and Iran (where Farsi (Persian), Dari and Hazaragi are spoken – Hazaragi and Dari being languages spoken by many Afghans living in Iran), as presented in Section 1.2.

While Burma is the fourth largest source country for young people arriving through the Humanitarian Programme, Karen is the seventh most spoken language for young people arriving through the Humanitarian Programme. This is likely to be because Dari, Arabic and Farsi is spoken in each of the Top 3 countries – Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. Nepali is spoken by arrivals from Nepal and Bhutan, and Swahili spoken by those from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

3.3 The refugee experience and settlement

Regardless of their mode of arrival, young people who settle in Australia through the Humanitarian Programme are likely to have experienced long-term insecurity, separation from family, exposure to violence and associated physical and mental health issues. They are also likely to have had limited access to services and opportunities, including education, employment, health and housing.

Young people granted an 866 visa have commonly undergone a dangerous journey to Australia (via multiple transit countries and a highly risky boat journey) and will have spent time in Australian detention facilities, in community detention, on

temporary visas, or at an offshore processing centre, while awaiting the outcome of their application for protection. The experience of seeking asylum is highly stressful and one of acute uncertainty, which often compounds the effects of pre-arrival trauma and can add to the complexity of the settlement process.

These experiences have implications for settlement wherever they settle in Australia – young people experience settlement in ways distinct from adults due to their age, developmental stage and position within the family, and often face additional and more complex transitions than their Australian-born counterparts.

The particular issues facing young people from refugee backgrounds in the settlement context include: learning a new language, adjusting to a new culture and education system (often with disrupted or limited schooling prior to Australia); finding work and establishing themselves in the Australian workforce; negotiating family relationships in the context of (new concepts of) independence, freedom and child and youth rights; negotiating cultural identity and expectations from family and community; and establishing new peer relationships⁷.

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

⁷ For further information see <http://cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Settling%20In%202006.pdf> and <http://cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Settling%20or%20Surviving%202013.pdf>