

**Refugee Resettlement Advisory
Council**

STRATEGY FOR REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE

2002

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Preface

On behalf of the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council, I am pleased to introduce this strategy for addressing some of the challenges and stresses that refugee young people may experience during resettlement in Australia.

There is a strong commitment at the Commonwealth, state and territory, local government, and community levels to develop and implement strategies that will improve the settlement experiences of refugee young people and support individuals and their families in their transitions through the education, employment, housing and health systems. This is essential if these young people are to obtain independence and participate actively in society.

I encourage all who work closely with refugee young people to read this strategy and incorporate it in their service delivery and program activities. The strategy's aim is to identify the challenges refugee young people face and ultimately deliver more responsive and integrated services for this group.

Young people from refugee backgrounds bring a resilience and strong commitment to starting a new life in Australia, in the wake of severe upheaval and disruption. Supporting these young people with the services and assistance they need early on will benefit the community in the long term and enhance their economic and social participation in Australia. They have a variety of cultural and linguistic skills and experiences, which will enrich the diversity of the Australian community in their personal and professional lives.

Major General Warren Glenny AO RFD ED (Rtd)
Chair
Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council

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Strategy for Refugee Young People: an overview

The Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council

The Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council was established in 1997 to advise the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs on matters relating to the settlement of refugees, Humanitarian Program entrants and migrants; in particular, the following:

- the appropriateness and adequacy of Commonwealth services, especially for refugees and Humanitarian Program entrants
- priorities for attention within the National Integrated Settlement Strategy, with emphasis on improving coordination of service delivery for refugees and Humanitarian Program entrants
- receipt of community feedback on implementation of the council's recommendations and evaluation of the effectiveness of such action.

Council membership

Major General Warren Glennly AO RFD ED (Rtd)– Chair

Dr Mohammed Alsalami
Ms Carmel Guerra
Ms Margaret Piper
Rev Eileen Thomson
Mr Kevin Liston

Mr Paris Aristotle
Ms Michelle Nguyen
Mr Gerald Searle
Ms Maritsa Eftimiou

The council has identified young refugees as a potentially vulnerable group who may have difficulty gaining access to mainstream support services because of a range of cultural, health and language barriers. Their needs are not currently being addressed by governments in a coordinated and strategic manner.

Responding to youth issues requires contributions from many sectors of government and the community, working under the mandate of the Charter for Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society to ensure that young people from refugee backgrounds have access to all of the settlement services they are entitled to.

The interdepartmental working party

An interdepartmental working party helped to develop this strategy, providing advice on the range of Commonwealth settlement and youth programs in operation at present. The working party included representatives of the Department of Education, Science and Training, the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Family and Community Services, Centrelink, the Department of Employment and Workplace

Relations, and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

The working party provided advice on how services might be brought together to meet the needs of refugee and newly arrived young people settling in Australia.

The consultation process

Council members Carmel Guerra, Paris Aristotle and Michelle Nguyen held consultations in Melbourne and Sydney in 2000-01 with community, state and territory, and Commonwealth government representatives. Discussions focused on ways of overcoming the barriers young refugees face in gaining access to employment, education, health and accommodation services. The wide range of existing programs available to young people was acknowledged. A series of 'good practice' case studies emerged from these consultations; these are described in this publication to illustrate some of the current initiatives.

There is further work to be done in investigating and suggesting responses to the difficulties young refugees face in regional areas and smaller cities, but that task is for local communities and service providers to undertake as part of their service and planning delivery.

This strategy is intended to influence mainstream funded programs, to improve services' responsiveness to refugee young people.

Barriers to accessing services

A major barrier identified during the consultations was the lack of pathways that allow young people to move from one program or service to the next. Good programs remained independent of each other and so could not provide a holistic service.

There is not necessarily a nexus between the desired outcome of service provision and actual use of services. Research shows that young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (including refugee young people) often do not use the mainstream or specialist services available to them. They might not know the service exists, or they might not understand its relevance to them. This could be a consequence of language barriers and/or a lack of 'outreach' services that ensure that information and referral services are relevant and accessible. Structural barriers are also a problem.

The youth policy framework

The Strategy for Refugee Young People is intended to complement the broader youth policy framework of the Commonwealth Government and to be in keeping with state and territory and local government priorities. In some instances young refugees face the same barriers to service access as other young people.

Linking into broader welfare reform and youth policy directions will strengthen the strategy. For example, the Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce, (set up by the Prime Minister in

September 1999) outlined major recommendations for future youth policy in its *Footprints to the Future* report in 2001. Among other things, the report suggested better ways of supporting young people and their families in the transition from school to training, employment and/or further education. The Commonwealth Government responded to the report in its 2001-02 budget initiatives. The response included funding for career and transition advisers to work with schools, local communities, young people and their families; innovative pilot projects testing ways of achieving successful community support for young people in transition; and continued funding for the Jobs Placement, Employment and Training, and Jobs Pathway programs.

This Strategy for Refugee Young People can also be considered in the context of the findings of the McClure report on welfare reform, *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society: Australia working together*. The Commonwealth's response, through the Australians Working Together package announced as a 2001-02 budget initiative, focuses on social partnerships, community capacity-building, participation, flexible service delivery, and improving employment outcomes for a range of target groups, including young people.

Together with the Strengthening Families and Communities Strategy, these initiatives provide an excellent framework in which to take action to meet the needs of refugee young people.

Scope of the strategy

The council's consultations revealed strong support for the many programs and services currently funded at the local, state and territory, and Commonwealth levels.

The Strategy for Refugee Young People aims to encourage understanding of, and build on, what is already happening in the community and at all levels of government. The council hopes that state and territory, local government and community organisations will work together to further develop and implement the strategy through the National Integrated Settlement Strategy, which is the overarching settlement planning framework.

State and territory settlement planning committees— an integral part of the National Integrated Settlement Strategy— are well placed to develop and implement local plans and other initiatives for rural and regional areas and in different metropolitan centres. These committees have embraced newly arrived and refugee young people as a priority in their settlement planning activities for 2002, and each state and territory will be focusing on strengthening settlement services for this group.

Implementation

This Strategy for Refugee Young People offers an opportunity to focus on and improve the quality of life of refugee young people in Australia. The role of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs is to continue collaborating with the agencies that currently provide mainstream services. The strategy can be applied as a good-practice tool for the planning and delivery of programs and

services whose target group encompasses young people from refugee backgrounds.

The strategy is intended to inform and influence current policy and program initiatives at Commonwealth and state and territory levels. The council's research emphasises the need to add value to existing programs and clarify the pathways for refugee young people.

With the council's endorsement, the department will:

- seek opportunities to influence the planning and delivery of programs and services that are relevant to refugee young people at the Commonwealth level
- seek similar opportunities at the state and territory level, including through the National Integrated Settlement Strategy and links with state or territory government portfolios
- disseminate to community and non-government organisations information about the strategy and young refugees' needs and characteristics
- monitor progress and report to the council.

Contact details

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs welcomes inquiries from interested individuals, organisations and agencies on how best they might use the strategy to enhance their own activities.

For more information contact:

Client Access Section
Settlement Branch
Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
PO Box 25
Belconnen ACT 2616

Tel: 02 6264 2339

Fax: 02 6264 3753

1 Refugee young people in resettlement

Who are refugee young people?

In international law and Australian migration law, the term *refugee* has a precise meaning. Under the 1951 United Nations Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, *refugee* applies to any person who is outside his or her country of nationality and is unable or unwilling to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.

The term *refugee young person* is broadened to include young people who may not have arrived as 'refugees'. Other migrant young people may have had a refugee-like experience of torture and trauma, persecution, violent civil discord, or periods spent in camps or third countries. The families of second-generation young people may also have had this experience.

This Strategy for Refugee Young People focuses on the common settlement difficulties and barriers faced by refugee young people, rather than a definitive description or application of specific visa classes. For the purpose of the strategy, *youth* is defined as ages 12 to 25 years inclusive; this definition was used by the recent Youth Pathways Taskforce and is well accepted in the youth policy field in Australia. It is important to note, however, that refugee young people may be in widely varying developmental stages as a result of disrupted education, exposure to different environments, or greater family responsibilities, so the age focus needs to be somewhat flexible.

Refugee young people in Australia

Between 1 July 1996 and 31 March 2002, 14 603 young people aged 12–25 years arrived in Australia with a refugee- or humanitarian-class visa or were assessed onshore after their initial entry as having refugee or humanitarian claims. Approximately 39 per cent of these people settled in New South Wales and 31 per cent settled in Victoria; Western Australia received the third-largest group—approximately 11 per cent (Source: Settlement Database). In the last six years young people accounted for about 27 per cent of all refugee and humanitarian arrivals.

The largest group came from the former Yugoslavia—about 38 per cent of all young arrivals (Bosnia 13 per cent, Croatia 10 per cent, 'Former Yugoslavia' (not further defined) 14 per cent). Other significant groups came from the Horn of Africa (Somalia 5 per cent, Sudan 8 per cent, Ethiopia and Eritrea 4 per cent); the Middle East (Iraq 11 per cent, Afghanistan 6 per cent; and Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos 4 per cent (Source: Settlement Database).

Table 1.1 shows the areas of the highest concentrations of refugee young people arriving between 1996 and 2001. The figures represent a sample size of the young refugee population: they do not include migrant young people who may have had refugee-like experiences or face similar settlement barriers. It is difficult to estimate the number of young people who may have spent time

in countries with a high level of disruption to their personal development as a result of civil and political unrest but who did not arrive through the humanitarian stream.

Table 1.1 Areas of settlement: refugee young people, 1996-2001

State/Territory	Local government area	Number
Australian Capital Territory		136
New South Wales	Fairfield	1108
	Liverpool	941
	Auburn	605
	Blacktown	528
	Parramatta	402
	Holroyd	252
	Canterbury	226
	Wollongong	167
Queensland	Brisbane	750
	Gold Coast	163
	Logan	99
South Australia	Hindmarsh and Woodville	351
	Enfield	152
	West Torrens	114
Tasmania	Hobart	71
Victoria	Greater Dandenong	931
	Brimbank	390
	Hume	347
	Darebin	307
	Maribyrnong	298
	Moreland	271
	Moonee Valley	257
	Melbourne	164
	Monash	142
Western Australia	Stirling	694
	Cockburn	130
	Wanneroo	128
	Canning	111

Source: Settlement Database.

The department estimates that in the same period an additional 3500 young people may have arrived in the family migration stream from countries with humanitarian inflows to Australia (Source: Settlement Database).

Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors

Refugee young people also include a number of unaccompanied humanitarian minors. Young people of particular concern include those who have arrived in Australia unaccompanied and who are not being cared for by a parent. As of May 2001, 218 unaccompanied minors were granted visas under Australia's humanitarian program, including 104 minors on temporary protection visas .

Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC), Australia is obliged to take appropriate measures to ensure that a minor (a child under 18 years of age) who is seeking refugee status in Australia or who is considered a refugee in accordance with domestic and international law, is given protection and humanitarian assistance.

Unaccompanied minors are covered by the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946 (IGOC Act). The Act ensures that minors who arrive in Australian territory unaccompanied have a legal guardian. Minors who fall under the IGOC Act become wards of the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. The Minister delegates his function as a guardian under the IGOC Act to officers of the child welfare authority in each state and territory.

Guardianship continues until the ward turns 18 years of age; leaves Australia permanently; becomes an Australian citizen; or when the Minister directs that the ward will not be covered by the Act. This may occur, for example, when the child is adopted or a relative takes responsibility for them.

Currently the majority of unaccompanied minors who arrived in Australian territory without authorisation are living in the community as Temporary Protection Visa holders having been found to be in need of Australia's protection.

The circumstances leading to these young people's arrival in Australia vary and this has implications for the care and support they need. They may have been accidentally separated from their families, abducted, or orphaned. In conflict situations, they may have been separated from their parents as a result of military recruitment or their parents' imprisonment.¹ Some may have arrived unaccompanied in Australia and be able to be cared for by an adult relative. Others may have been living independently overseas or they may live independently in Australia if they are of sufficient age.

While the care arrangements for these young people vary according to whether they have a parent or relative to care for them in Australia, the Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors Program is available to all unaccompanied minors.² The program is funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and provides a care package of settlement support.

These young people are highly likely to need support and assistance with:

- assistance with family tracing and family reunification where possible, including assistance to locate any known relatives living in Australia
- access to translating and interpreting services
- support through an established, effective and caring relationship with an adult or links into community support systems appropriate to their age
- re-establishing cultural links - some young people may have arrived in Australia without any links to relevant cultural or community organisations
- stable and supported home based care or other appropriate accommodation
- support for those who are old enough to live independently

¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care', 1994.

² The Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors program is funded by DIMIA and provided by State and Territory child welfare agencies under delegated care arrangements. The program operates under a Commonwealth agreement established in 1985 with five state child welfare authorities including NSW, Victoria, WA, Queensland and SA. For more information see <http://www.dimia.gov.au/facts/84unaccompanied.htm>.

- support for those who are making a transition to living independently
- material support through maintenance allowances under the Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minor program or other social security benefits they may be entitled to
- access to appropriate health and social welfare services to reduce crises and trauma
- education, training, social, sporting, recreational or cultural activities appropriate to their needs

Providing stable care and protection is paramount to supporting these young people. Establishing family links in Australia is also highly important and where possible, this is factored into their accommodation and care program options if an adult relative is available to care for them.

The settlement experience

Youth is widely recognised as a time of transition— from childhood to adulthood, from schooling to employment, and from financial and emotional dependence on family to interdependence and independence. It is also a time when young people begin to develop an adult identity and consolidate their own values and beliefs. These changes in physical, emotional and intellectual development and in the expectations of family and wider society may be stressful.

The challenges and stresses of the transition to adulthood are compounded when a young person is making the transition to a new culture, dealing with the practical adjustments of settling in a new country, and trying to come to terms with the upheaval and trauma of their past. This may interfere with their identity formation as they struggle to reconcile the competing values of their country of origin and those of their peers in a new country. Most have limited English language proficiency when they arrive in Australia. Generally, they are likely to have experienced some or all of the following:

- forced to leave their country of origin
- profound disruption before arrival in Australia, including extended periods of discrimination
- conflict and human rights abuses in their countries of origin, often followed by a period of uncertain status in a country of asylum— in some cases in a refugee camp
- exposed to traumatic experiences such as loss of or separation from family members, torture or life-threatening events
- prolonged periods in countries where service infrastructure— for example, health and education infrastructure— is poorly developed or disrupted as a result of conflict.

As a consequence of torture or other traumatic experiences, some may suffer grief, anxiety, depression, guilt or symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, which may persist long after settlement in Australia. This can interfere with the settlement process both directly and indirectly— for example, by affecting a person's capacity to trust and form relationships with family, teachers, peers and the broader community.

Refugee young people may also be in poor health on arrival and may have had limited access to health care before migration. Some health conditions can interfere directly with settlement because of the time and organisation involved in dealing with multiple and complex problems in an unfamiliar health care system. Health professionals might not be familiar with particular health problems that refugees suffer, or they might misdiagnose the somatic symptoms a young refugee exhibits.

The Transition Program

Moving to a new school has been highlighted as a time when young refugees feel vulnerable and have difficulty readjusting; it causes mixed feelings about leaving friends and teachers and 'starting yet again' at a new place. The Transition Program aims to reduce anxiety and engender a sense of safety for students entering mainstream high schools. The program connects new students with students who have spent some time at a mainstream high school, who act as peer leaders. Students meet with a facilitator once a week for the first five weeks following entry to the school. The focus is on providing practical information and support through, for example:

- anticipating responses to transition and readjustment and providing general information
- solving problems at school and knowing who to go to for help
- learning about subjects
- making and supporting friends

The program has been trialled in Yeronga High School, in Brisbane, and is continuing with new student groups throughout the year. The Transition Program is now being run by a School Health Nurse at a high school in Brisbane and involves the ESL coordinator, Guidance Officer and teachers. A worker from QPASTT attends one of the sessions to talk about the impact of change and strategies to cope with transition, for young survivors of torture and trauma. The School Health Nurse coordinates different school staff to visit the session, in conjunction with peer leaders, to provide a network of support structure for new students. The program also includes a parent information session.

Keeping Up: Stories and reflections of young refugees in Brisbane:

A Worker's Guide

The first stage of this project was funded by Brisbane City Council to develop a photo scrapbook outlining the experiences of young refugees settling in Brisbane. It is a "youth voice" where young people's accounts of arriving, settling and living in Australia. The booklet was distributed to service providers and schools throughout Brisbane. The second stage provides information for workers about young people from refugee backgrounds. The guide includes definitions, visa categories and world refugee "hot spots", suggestions for organisations and individual workers to work with young people from a refugee background, a list of agency contacts and language and religion charts.

Solid Ground

QPASTT in partnership with CONTACT Inc. and funded by the Office of Youth Affairs produced a short video of young people from refugee backgrounds talking about their experiences. Issues covered include settlement, school and legal issues especially in relation to those on a temporary protection visa. The Worker's Guide was launched at the YANQ seminar - Voices from the Edge; Young People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities with the video screening. Solid Ground is available for sale from CONTACT Inc by calling 07 3257 2211 and the scrapbook is available from QPASTT by calling 07 3391 6677.

The Transition Program

Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma

118 Park Rd
Woolloongabba QLD 4102

Tel: 07 3391 6677
 Fax: 07 3391 6388
 Email: cc@qpastt.org.au

Risk and protective factors

Protective factors	Risk factors
Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem • Academic and sporting achievements • Connectedness • Religious faith • Coping skills 	Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low self-esteem and poor self-concept • Isolation, anomie • Exposure to adverse life events
Social and environmental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to educational, training and employment activities • Social advantage • Developed social networks and community participation • Freedom from discrimination • Feelings of safety, participation and support in school 	Social and environmental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment and lack of access to education • Social disadvantage • Limited networks • Racism and discrimination • Disrupted education

Researchers have identified many of the risk and protective factors affecting emotional wellbeing— both during adolescence and in later life. Young refugee people face additional risk factors during their process of settlement in Australia because of the transition to a new culture, histories of torture and trauma, and poor health. Some of the difficulties may be mediated by family and community support, but the protective factors may not be optimal. Further, the families themselves may have reduced capacity to provide support.

Risk factors

Parents may be struggling with settling in a new country: they may lack the language skills and the accumulated cultural experience they need to support their children in the learning process and to advocate on behalf of their children in an unfamiliar and complex society.

Refugee families may have limited financial and material resources available to them in the early settlement period. They suffer relatively high rates of unemployment, are likely to receive a low or fixed income, and are vulnerable to housing difficulties (including homelessness, overcrowding and sub-standard accommodation).

Parents may be experiencing mental health difficulties associated with pre-migration events and settlement. Extreme disturbance in parents— such as violence— can become a new trauma for their children. Family breakdown may occur as a

result of cultural conflict, making young people vulnerable to homelessness and isolation.

Many refugee young people have lost their parents and/or other family members in the course of their refugee experience. Some refugee young people arrive in Australia unaccompanied by members of their immediate family or their care arrangements break down soon after arrival. Support within the wider ethnic community may also be limited— most particularly in smaller, emerging communities.

These young people are at a critical stage of personal development and are entering a highly competitive, performance-oriented phase in their personal, educational and professional lives. For some, these barriers can jeopardise the immediate and long-term success of settlement, placing them at risk of marginalisation, poor physical and mental health, and life-long social and economic disadvantage.

Protective factors

The success of settlement for refugee young people is also influenced by protective factors in their lives. Among these factors are the young person's self-esteem and academic and sporting achievements, their connectedness with their family and community, their religious faith and spirituality, and their repertoire of coping skills. A nurturing and stable family environment will strengthen their resilience, as will social factors such as access to educational, training and employment opportunities, developed social networks, community participation, and freedom from discrimination.

Supporting Families in Cultural Transition

The Families in Cultural Transition (FICT) resource kit developed by the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma (STARTTS) assists refugee and migrant families adapt to their new environment, and to the strains placed on their family structure as a result of migrating to Australia. The FICT program has been running since the resource it was launched in 1996 and has been adopted by a number of groups to assist their target communities.

The kit has been used with Horn of African families in a partnership project between STARTTS, members of the Voiceless Children's Network and the NSW Inner West Migrant Resource Centre. The program aims were to prevent relationship breakdowns between parent and child in refugee families from the Horn of Africa. It delivered a series of workshops on problems and issues relating to family and young people, including helping parents reflect on how their children may perceive cross cultural transition and dealing with stereotypes of Australian and African schooling behaviour. This included the use of bilingual facilitators who had themselves arrived in Australia as refugees.

Other partnerships include the ongoing work done between STARTTS and the NSW Department of Education. Staff in a number of schools, and particularly in Intensive English Centres, have been trained as FICT facilitators and they regularly run programs for parents of newly-arrived students. They have had great success in introducing refugee parents to the school environment and encouraging their involvement in all facets of the school, as well as seeing an improvement in the children's behaviour and emotional stability as a result of their parents' participation in the FICT program.

Families in Cultural Transition Coordinator

STARTTS

PO Box 258

Auburn NSW 2144

Tel: 02 9646 6666

Fax: 02 9646 6610

Website: <http://www.swsahs.nsw.gov.au/areaser/startts//index.asp>

2 Social disconnection and the justice system

Social disconnection and justice issues

This section addresses the intersection between public perceptions of young people from ethnic backgrounds and broader juvenile justice issues. The topics of youth, ethnicity and crime are becoming increasingly linked in the media and they strongly influence general perceptions of young people from ethnic backgrounds. Young people from refugee backgrounds should not be viewed in any way as more at risk of contact with the justice system than any other young person, but it should be recognised that these issues can seriously impact on their perceptions and treatment within a larger community.

Youth group formations and public perception

Youth group formations are increasingly reported on in the media, mixed with sensationalised reports of incidents involving young people from diverse backgrounds and their involvement in anti-social or illegal activities. Young people in ethnic groupings are being increasingly scrutinised for their appearance (ie in public areas) at least as much as for their actual behaviour. This contributes to increased negative public perceptions and fears of young people in groups on public streets or in public spaces. These perceptions can impact directly upon the quality of young people's lives and make them target groups for increased attention, purely on the basis of their identifiable presence.³

One study of young people from six different ethnic communities conducted in Melbourne in 1999 has found that group formations were actually a normal activity for the majority of young people concerned.⁴ Cultural tensions between diverse communities in school environments, coupled with parents' inclination to restrict their children's autonomy (often through fears of the new, unfamiliar environment) meant that they turned to social groups for institutional support and protection. Membership of a group tended to be associated with having similar interests, similar appearance and the need for a social network.

Other young people gained social status, identity, and compensation for their social or economic disadvantage (homelessness, unemployment or lack of income security, low educational qualifications, lack of family and social support network and domestic problems) from belonging to a group. All six communities cited negative relationships with police and authority figures, constant contact and intervention from such figures to varying degrees in public spaces.

A briefing paper presented to the National Crime Prevention program notes that while a minority of people within a particular ethnic community are engaged in particularly anti-social or even criminal activity, prejudicial stereotyping of

³ Perrone, 'Young People and Gangs - Briefing Paper for National Crime Prevention, Commonwealth Attorney General's Department', 2000, p. 7.

⁴ Guerra, Lampugnani, Perrone, White, 'Ethnic Youth Gangs in Australia - Do They Exist? Overview Report', 1999.

that community may lead to differential policing of the whole population group and negative reactions by authority figures or stakeholders in public space areas.⁵ At the very least, this can generate resentment on the part of young people from such a community, who feel themselves to be disproportionately contacted by authority figures or public space stakeholders where they tend to meet and socialise.

Research base

More social research is needed to better understand and respond to the disturbing trend of young people from ethnic backgrounds who are increasingly represented in the justice system. A recent report on refugee young people notes that while young people from non-English speaking backgrounds are still under represented in the juvenile justice system overall, some ethnic groups are now over represented in the justice system, including some groups comprised largely of refugees.⁶

Increased data collection on the ethnicity of young people in the justice system has been called for in several juvenile justice reports in recent years.⁷ A lack of cross-jurisdictional research on youth, ethnicity and the justice system is cited as one of the difficulties in reporting accurately on the extent to which these young people are involved in the justice system. While the Melbourne study on ethnic youth group formations gives some insight into why young people turn to groups, further research on the life circumstances of young people from ethnic backgrounds who ultimately become involved in the justice system is still needed.

The Australasian Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau (formerly the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau) is currently coordinating a national research project on youth gangs in a partnership consortium with the Australian Multicultural Foundation. This qualitative research project will be conducted through interviews with 70 - 100 young people in each State and Territory, and will draw on youth groups, community networks, focus groups and youth workers. The aim of the research project is to identify the extent to which criminal activity exists within youth gangs and examine issues of ethnicity.

The project will be conducted in all States and Territories over a twelve month period, drawing on the groundwork laid by the Melbourne study on youth gangs noted above. The research findings will inform further policing strategies for addressing youth gang issues.

Risk factors for refugee young people

There are a number of risk and protective factors which may propel young people into contact with the justice system generally and determine their responses at such a transition point. For some young people, this may include specific pre-

⁵ Perrone, 'Young People and Gangs - Briefing Paper for National Crime Prevention, Commonwealth Attorney General's Department', 2000.

⁶ Coventry, Guerra, MacKenzie, 'Wealth of All Nations: identification of strategies to assist refugee young people in transition to independence - a report to the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme', 2001, p. 65.

⁷ Perrone, 2000 and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 'NESB young people and juvenile justice', 1994, p. 28.

migration or resettlement issues as one component of several factors which can influence their capacity to respond.

Refugee young people are resilient, resourceful and adaptable individuals who have survived profound disruption in their lives but they are far more likely to have already had negative experiences of authority than their Australian counterparts. They may not be familiar with their civil rights and responsibilities in Australia or be fully aware of the differences between the laws of their country of birth and Australian laws.⁸ Their families' capacity to support them may be reduced if the family has been split or separated, or the family may not even be present in Australia.

Early intervention measures and policy responses to juvenile justice issues should take account of factors such as trauma, loss of family members and separation of families where relevant. The pressures of these young people's migration processes create an even greater need for stable networks, meaningful connections with school and the broader community, and outlets for social participation and recreation.

Policy responses

The first national summit on police-ethnic youth relations in 1995 generated a number of ethnic youth-police partnership programs to address youth-police relations, manage emerging community issues and develop stronger partnerships between police, young people and the community sector.

Since then, the Australasian Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau has led a number of initiatives throughout Australia with local police jurisdictions in partnership with young people, their communities and a variety of government and community agencies. The police-youth partnerships have focussed on improving police-community relations through community outreach and youth-friendly programs, raising police awareness of cross cultural issues through community consultations and raising youth and community awareness about Australian laws and the role of police in Australia.⁹

Future initiatives includes plans to address media reporting of ethnic communities in a media workshop, bringing together mainstream and ethnic media representatives from radio, television and newspaper, the police and representatives from diverse communities. The workshop will examine journalistic responsibility, accountability and reporting ethics, to develop an understanding between these stakeholders about fair and balanced media reporting on ethnic communities.¹⁰

Further strategies for social policy, youth and justice policy areas to consider include:

- mapping existing community services and settlement policies to determine what does or does not exist specifically for young people in particular areas and assessing the possibilities for further development of support agencies and services
- further research into youth group formations and ethnic young people's involvement in the justice system

⁸ Coventry, Guerra, MacKenzie, 'Wealth of all nations - identification of strategies to assist refugee young people in transition to independence: a report to the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme, (draft) 2002.

⁹ <http://www.apmab.gov.au/news/index.html>

¹⁰ http://www.apmab.gov.au/news/news2002/2002_07.html

- more adequate information sources for government agencies, the police and the media, to give more accurate public reporting and responses to specific groups in a non-racialised manner
- providing specific spaces and facilities so that young people may acknowledge their religious and cultural practices in a dignified, inclusive manner
- providing quality educational facilities and services, particularly those based on a multicultural curriculum and atmosphere, where students are provided with adequate individual and group support and where anti-racism strategies and practices are applied across the whole school population
- family support structures, with forums devised for greater community engagement and involving the young people directly in finding collective solutions to problems
- improved pathways for young people at risk of 'disconnection', to help them re-establish positive connections with the community through education, vocational or employment opportunities
- alternative media portrayals in program and reporting content, with a view to providing more accurate information and more rounded accounts of specific ethnic minority groups, so that the use of gratuitous images and descriptions based on stereotypes is discouraged
- justice strategies that can engage young people generally and, within that group, refugee young people. Strategies should take account of economic and social factors and encourage young people's personal development and participation in vocational, community and leisure activities.

Finally, it is worth noting that all young people are vulnerable to involvement with the justice system and that most young people engage in some anti-social or illegal behaviour at some stage.¹¹ It is common for adolescents to develop their own, often insular, groups because of a need to form a strong collective identity with their peers. These groups usually seek outlets for social activity rather than criminal activity.

¹¹ Guerra, Lampugnani, Perrone, White, 'Ethnic Youth Gangs in Australia - Do They Exist? Overview Report', 1999.

Police - youth partnerships

Since the first national police - ethnic youth relations summit in 1995, there has been a continuing commitment to improving relations between police and ethnic young people through enhanced partnerships projects throughout Australia. The Australasian Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau has conducted several forums and exchanges between the police and youth sectors across Australia with a view to developing solutions to problems concerning ethnic young people. The last forum, held in November 2000, highlighted the need for a national strategic framework on young people and public space.

The goals of the partnerships are to:

- promote proactive and developmental activities
- manage crisis events and emerging issues
- promote partnerships between police, young people and the non-government sector
- publicise state and territory activities and highlight good-practice models.

Examples of partnership initiatives include:

- an adventure camp for African youth to establish positive youth-police relations and raise awareness about African culture, held in conjunction with the African community (South Australia)
- a forum with young people, police officers and youth workers to develop a set of protocols guiding interactions and relations between police and young people (Queensland)
- meetings with Aboriginal and ethnic community leaders, parents and police to discuss feuding between Asian and Aboriginal youths (Western Australia)
- consultations with young migrants and refugees on the use of public space and fear of crime— young people noted areas where they feel in danger of verbal, physical and racial abuse and strategies were identified to increase their feelings of safety (Tasmania)
- school-based constables monitoring any emerging problems relating to the supply and use of drugs and alcohol and working to increase primary students' knowledge of how to resist substance use (Northern Territory)
- a skills-development program for young migrants and refugees leaving the education system, offering physical activities, skills for a challenging setting, and a graduation ceremony (Victoria).

**Australasian Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau
(formerly the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau)
PO Box 415
Melbourne VIC 3005**

**Tel: 03 9603 8341
Fax: 03 9603 8330
Email: info@apmab.gov.au.**

You, the Law and Society

The information package 'You, the Law and Society', comprising booklets and videos, has been specifically designed to meet the needs of people settling in Queensland including arrivals with refugee and humanitarian status.

In partnership with the Australasian Police Multicultural Advisory Group, the Australian Red Cross, and with input from several volunteers and community groups, 'You, the Law and Society' was first produced in English, Arabic and the languages of former Yugoslavia. Subsequently, at the instigation and with support from the Vietnamese and Chinese communities, booklets have also been produced in these languages.

Australasian Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau
PO Box 415
Melbourne VIC 3005
Tel: 03 9603 8341
Fax: 03 9603 8330
Email: info@apmab.gov.au

Whitelion Project - Providing community support to juvenile offenders

The Whitelion project is a program based in Victoria that aims to provide better linkages for young people in Juvenile Justice Centres to members of the community and community organisations.

Whitelion Inc. is a non-profit community organisation that was formed in 1999 as a response to the need for better linkages for young people in one of Victoria's three Juvenile Justice Centres to support community. Whitelion was established because of a belief that young people in custody have low levels of connectedness with the community and social institutions (family, school, positive adult role models, etc) and that this contributes to high levels of vulnerability and antisocial behaviour. Whitelion aims to break the cycle of substance abuse, criminal activity, and incarceration by providing opportunities for young people to find alternatives to this life.

Current programs include centre based programs, community-based activities an employment program and a mentor program. Whitelion is built on numerous partnerships between sporting associations, juvenile justice centres, VicHealth, the Victoria Police Youth Liaison Unit and Charles Sturt University and other partners.

Whitelion Project
Tel: 03 9389 4420
Contact: Mark Watts
Email: mark.watt@dhs.vic.gov.au

Settlement services

Settlement refers to the period of adjustment migrants and refugees experience before they can fully participate in Australia's culturally diverse society. They may need help with gaining access to basic services such as housing, employment and health and medical services. The length of the settlement period varies for each migrant or refugee, depending on factors such as their skills and qualifications, their English language ability, and their familiarity with Australian culture and institutions.

Settlement services involve the whole range of human services, of which the settlement services funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs are a small and complementary part. DIMIA services are intended to build bridges and facilitate access to mainstream service providers at both the Commonwealth and state and territory levels, but they are not intended to supplant mainstream services. Similarly, the transcultural mental health centres and networks funded by the Department of Health and Ageing are designed to support mainstream services in dealing with diverse client groups.

A basic tenet underlying settlement strategies is that successful settlement benefits all Australians— not just migrants and refugees. Early access to settlement services helps people move towards becoming self-reliant, valued members of the community; at the same time, the participation of migrants and refugees enriches our society.

The national framework for settlement services

Settlement services provided by government and community organisations across Australia are coordinated through the National Integrated Settlement Strategy, which aims to link and improve the services available to migrants and refugees at local, regional, state and territory, and national levels.

Support services generally fall into three categories:

- general social services provided by government for all eligible Australian residents and citizens— for example, financial aid, health services, education services and help with finding employment
- specialist settlement services provided by government and community organisations— for example, the Adult Migrant English Program, ESL classes, transcultural mental health services, and a variety of programs funded by state and territory and local governments
- services provided to Humanitarian Program entrants only— for example, on-arrival services administered through DIMIA's Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy framework and the services provided through the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma, which is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing.

National Settlement Project 2002

Each year a National Settlement Project focuses attention on a particular issue as part of national settlement planning activities. In 2002, the National Project for State and

Territory Settlement Planning Committees is 'Promoting Awareness of Needs of Newly Arrived Young People, Particularly Refugees'. The National Settlement Project 2002 aims to improve the coordination of settlement, support and transition services available to newly arrived youth, including young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Activities currently under way vary from state to state, and include a mixture of projects such as:

- identifying youth demographics in states and territories
- mapping existing services and service points for newly arrived youth
- promoting awareness about youth settlement needs amongst mainstream service providers (ie health, housing, employment, pathways)
- exploring options for improving coordination services between agencies

For more information about the National Settlement Project please contact a DIMIA State or Territory Office or:

The National Integrated Settlement Strategy (NISS)
Secretariat
Settlement Branch
Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous
Affairs
PO Box 25
Belconnen ACT 2616

Tel: 02 6264 1725

Fax: 02 6264 3753

Youth information web pages

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs has developed specific web pages targeting newly arrived young people including refugees within its website at www.immi.gov.au/settle/youth. The information on these pages is both general and state specific and is targeted at young people aged 14-25. It is part of the strategy to support the National Settlement Project for 2002 - '*Supporting the Needs of Newly-Arrived Young People, Particularly Refugees*'. The Youth Information pages are located within the '*Settling in Australia*' section of the DIMIA Website.

The pages link to a range of government and community programs, offering 'youth friendly' contacts for education, health, housing, lifestyle, recreation, sport, study and work activities.

The Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society

The goal of equitable participation in society cannot be achieved by settlement services alone. As a concept, equitable

participation reflects society's responsiveness to and acceptance of those groups within it, so the concept changes as the dynamics of society change. A significant indicator of change was the Commonwealth Government's launch of the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society in 1998.

The charter requires that, in the planning and delivery of their services, all government agencies take into consideration the needs of people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This could include ensuring that information is translated into different languages, providing interpreters or bilingual staff to communicate with clients, and training staff in cultural diversity.

The aim of the charter is to promote equality of access and equity for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who seek government or government-funded services. The charter applies not only to mainstream services provided by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments but also to services funded by government and provided by community organisations or the private sector.

Brokerage

In this context, the term *brokerage* describes the way a system, or a particular service or program, facilitates a young person's access to the pathway appropriate to their needs. It can also include methods such as case management to facilitate pathways. A young person is not left alone to negotiate an often alien and complex system; rather, the system or the worker within the system helps the young person take the next step along the pathway of potential services and options to achieve the desired outcome.

The aim is not to develop specialised programs for a single group of young people: it is unlikely that much would be achieved by that on its own. Instead, brokerage is designed to provide access to sustainable solutions to a problem, using a strategic approach. This would have the following long-term objectives:

- engaging the existing services and funding in a coordinated, holistic way to support refugee young people in different areas of their lives, particularly in education and training, employment, health and housing
- engaging key players— government and non-government— in reviewing, evaluating and monitoring the strategy
- providing an experiential and evidential base to inform policy development and settlement planning for refugee young people

These objectives can be achieved through an action approach that has several important characteristics:

- It involves the range of mainstream services that are currently providing, or that could provide, support for refugee young people— for example, housing, income security, counselling and support, and education and training
- It seeks to develop and demonstrate a good-practice approach that builds on success

- It incorporates a rigorous evaluation and research component, so as to provide a clear evidence base for planning interventions and for advocacy on behalf of young people in the policy-development and resource-distribution processes
- It links clearly with appropriate policy-development structures and processes

Case management

Like many young people who use support services, refugee young people feel it is easier to deal with one person who understands their situation and can direct and support them in negotiating the maze of services and service providers. Although case management tends to be resource intensive, and may therefore need to be targeted to those most at risk, it is viewed as cost-effective for many who otherwise fall through the cracks in a complex system. It also offers a flexible and individually tailored pathway.

Individual case management may be the optimal approach to supporting refugee young people because it has the capacity to:

- facilitate a holistic orientation at the service-delivery level by engaging at the 'front line' a range of players who are familiar with the services available and the needs of refugee young people
- ensure that a refugee young person is able to access a level and combination of services suited to their particular need
- obviate the need for refugee young people to negotiate a complex service-delivery system alone by providing a guiding hand
- ensure that support is properly coordinated
- ensure clear lines of accountability for support

The Special Refugee Representative Network

In order to help refugee students achieve their full potential in school through academic, cultural and sporting pursuits, the Special Refugee Representative Network enables each secondary school in the Australian Capital Territory to make provision for a full-time staff member with responsibility for establishing and maintaining routine contact with Refugee and Humanitarian Program students and their families.

The network is currently operating in the northern half of Canberra, and there are plans to extend it to the southern half of the city.

Companion House
Tel: 02 6247 7227
Fax: 02 6247 1416
Email: comhouse@bigpond.com.au

4 Good practice in delivering services to refugee young people

It is more than likely that refugee young people will be using mainstream services for their education, employment, housing, training and support needs. The high cost involved for mainstream service providers wishing to comprehensively meet the complex needs of a relatively small group can mean that it is more practical to develop partnerships with other agencies and to facilitate brokerage.

There are many ways of providing flexible services without having to buy specialist expertise. Links into specialist service providers and networks, or engaging in outreach work in schools or among already established refugee networks in local communities and religious centres, can be helpful. This may entail providing information in a number of languages, engaging youth workers who are able to direct and guide the young people through the maze of services, and training existing customer service staff in diversity and equity principles.

A number of good-practice service-delivery principles were identified during the consultations that preceded development of this strategy: translating and interpreting services; early intervention; accommodation of diversity; data collection and research; flexible service delivery; family and community involvement; developing partnerships; building professional capacity; and program continuity.

Examples of successful programs or models already operating are interspersed throughout this document. They do not represent a comprehensive list of programs available; rather, they were highlighted through the council's consultations.

Translating and interpreting services

The first principle to consider when designing and developing brokerage services for refugee young people is the principle of *communication* from the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society. Services must be able to communicate effectively with their clients, and that can mean communicating directly or facilitating communication in different languages and in a variety of media.

The Translating and Interpreting Service helps migrants with limited English skills to gain access to services provided by government and community agencies. It generally operates on a fee-for-service basis, working with individuals, Commonwealth and state and territory government agencies, community organisations, and private sector businesses. The service is available free to only a limited number of organisations, so it is important that other organisations budget for this requirement. As part of accessible and equitable service provision, mainstream agencies should plan for language services by:

- gathering information about the language needs of the community and of migrant and refugee clients within targeted communities
- calculating and specifying the component to be set aside for the provision of language services in the contract or agreement between the service provider and the funding body

- specifying the level and quality of language service (that is, benchmarking) within the contract or agreement.

Early intervention

Experience suggests that, although most refugee young people benefit from some support, a small number— primarily those with very disrupted education or experiencing settlement difficulties— require more intensive assistance. There is a need for service models with the capacity to offer low-key, preventive intervention to a broad range of refugee young people, while identifying and offering intensive support to the relatively small number experiencing acute difficulty.

Developing a set of critical indicators, or clusters of needs, for refugee young people would assist with early intervention. Early assessment means that links with services or pathways (such as family support programs) can be created in good time.

Reconnect Young Refugees

Reconnect Young Refugees is a joint initiative of a number of Victorian agencies, including the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau, the Northern Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre, the Ecumenical Migration Centre, and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, the program has been hailed by youth and community workers in Melbourne as a successful early intervention model of service delivery to young people. It has been adapted to focus exclusively on the needs of refugee young people.

Reconnect Young Refugees incorporates early intervention in the family and community context and includes a funding component for brokerage activities such as purchasing counselling services and giving workers access to transport and mobile phones for outreach work. The program also incorporates an action research component that focuses on documenting project successes, collecting data on refugee young people and homelessness, improving program outcomes, and producing reports and publications.

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues

Level 1, 308 Drummond St
Carlton VIC 3053

Tel: 03 9349 3466

Fax: 03 9480 0986

Email: info@cmyi.net.au

Reconnect action research website

http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/youth-reconnect_action_research_kit.htm

The Refugee Youth Pathways Program

The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues' Refugee Youth Pathways Program is Australia's only refugee youth-specific project funded under JPET (the Jobs Placement, Employment and Training program). The Pathways Program aims to provide a comprehensive support service to refugee young people aged between 15 and 21 years who are in transition from school to work, education and training. It is an early intervention program whereby three support workers are placed in different language centres and schools; this gives refugee young people immediate access to the service. Through case management the workers assess a young person's education and training needs and manage their exit from school. A plan is then developed in consultation with the young person and other services such as schools, training institutions, language centres, housing services and employers. The young person's family is also encouraged to participate in the decision-making process.

Another important aspect of the program is the community development component. Through involvement in regional networks and forums, the workers are able to advocate on behalf of young people and educate the broader community about the situation of refugee young people. The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues uses the information obtained from the project to influence policy making and improve coordinating mechanisms.

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
Level 1, 308 Drummond St
Carlton VIC 3053

Tel: 03 9349 3466
Fax: 03 9480 0986
Email: info@cmyi.net.au

Accommodating diversity

Refugee young people make up a relatively small and diverse population. Their families are settling throughout Australia, and each region has different service-delivery capacities and cultures. There is considerable diversity in:

- cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds
- the degree of disruption to education and socialisation experienced prior to migration
- the level of economic and social development and the culture and structure of the education system in Australia, the country of origin, and the country of asylum
- age

Sticks 'n' Stones

The Torture and Trauma Survivors Service of the Northern Territory and Tracks Inc. both received grants— under the Living in Harmony initiative funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs— to work together on a community arts project called Sticks 'n' Stones. The aim of this project was to bring together young people from Indigenous, refugee, migrant and other cultural backgrounds to celebrate cultural identities, explore ways of understanding difference, and promote racial tolerance through a range of creative art forms.

The project had two main areas of participation running between September 1999 and June 2000; a website and a visual arts workshops and performance program. Guest artists and storytellers shared their skills and knowledge in the workshops, and banners and sculptures made in the workshops were used in public performance and celebrations.

The Torture and Trauma Survivors Service of the Northern Territory
PO Box 1226
Nightcliff NT 0814
Tel: 08 8985 3311
Fax: 08 9885 3322
Email: ttsnt@austar.net.com.au

Living in Harmony website
<http://www.immi.gov.au/harmony>

Data collection and research

Planning and developing strong models requires an accurate assessment of the number and demographic characteristics of refugee young people, along with an understanding of the factors that facilitate, or inhibit, settlement progress.

The department's Settlement Database provides statistical data to government and community agencies involved in the planning and provision of migrant settlement services. The database contains over 750 000 records of settler arrivals and/or visas issued since 1 January 1991, including information on such variables as country of birth, age, sex, visa class, main language, English proficiency, and intended and actual local government area of residence.

For further information, visit the Settlement Database website (see Appendix C) or contact:

Settlement Database Team
Tel: 02 6264 2285 or 02 6264 2212
Fax: 02 6264 2753
Email: sdb.help.desk@immi.gov.au

Other agencies are developing or already have available information that can assist organisations in policy making and service planning. They include:

- the Department of Health and Ageing— a database of community, health, emergency and other services
- the National Forum for Survivors of Torture and Trauma— a data set describing clients, conditions and services, which

will record information on both a regional and a national basis, including service use, referrals, treatment programs and outcomes for clients

Flexible service delivery

Services need to accommodate diversity and be responsive to the geographic distribution of the target group and local service infrastructure. This is particularly applicable to English language programs for refugee young people: the degree of educational disruption and the capacity to learn vary widely between individuals.

Young refugees and their families who settle in non-metropolitan areas face additional difficulties in gaining access to mainstream and culturally specific services. They may have equally pressing needs, but their numbers are relatively few and they are dispersed in an environment where there is less capacity to deliver services.

Cabramatta Anglicare and the Jobs Placement, Employment and Training program

The objective of Cabramatta Anglicare's JPET program, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, is to work with young people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or facing similar severe problems in ways that not only help them with their income and personal support needs but also ensure that they secure a career path and a sustainable future.

The program targets people aged 15 to 21 years who face multiple barriers to participation in education or vocational training or to gaining and maintaining unemployment. Refugee young people are an identified JPET client group.

The Department of Education, Science and Training is trialling more flexible and collaborative funding arrangements in programs such as JPET. Existing service providers will be encouraged to develop partnerships across programs and across government portfolios, to simplify lines of accountability and provide a more integrated service. This seems to be an innovative way of building programs' capacity to deliver services through the development of partnerships and streamlining reporting requirements.

Cabramatta Anglicare

Tel: 02 9755 0233

Fax: 02 9755 0841

Email: jpet@anglicare.org.au or cabramatta@anglicare.org.au

JPET website

<http://jpet.facs.gov.au/index.asp>

Family and community involvement

The barriers faced by refugee young people are not only a product of their personal experiences of the transition to adolescence and adulthood and the transition to a new culture. They are also a product of parents' ability to provide support during settlement. Increasing refugee families' and communities'

participation in schools and the wider community and providing information about services for young people is critical.

Although it is recognised that some young people are reluctant to share certain types of information with their families or communities, the information should be accessible to the young person's support networks as well as being specifically targeted to the individual.

**Catholic Migrant Centre
Refugee Youth Projects**

Based on school needs in the Perth area, the Catholic Migrant Centre developed the following projects targeting refugee and migrant youth funded by the Community Settlement Services Scheme grants program:

Harmony of Colours

The Harmony of Colours pilot project supported a performance group of art, drama and music for 30 students from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The project aims were to increase students' self esteem, build relationships between students with similar experiences who didn't know each other and raise the school community's awareness of their experiences. Harmony of Colours took place over ten weeks, with 30 students meeting weekly to design a performance piece based on the theme of "freedom". The students presented the performance piece when they graduated from their Introductory English Centre to move into mainstream school classes at the end of the project. The Catholic Migrant Centre hopes to replicate this project on a larger scale in the future, to produce an companion anthology of student experiences and bring the performance to the wider community.

Senior student support group

The Senior student support group currently targets 16 to 21 year old students who are in dysfunctional family situations, experiencing intergenerational conflict, or having to live independently or even living without any family in Australia. The support group covers key life-skills topics such as budgeting, legal services, assertiveness training, coping with grief and loss, sexuality and well-being and mental health. The support group links the young people with specialist service providers to help them deal with these issues as relevant. It also provides a supportive peer environment for the young people to explore these issues.

**Catholic Migrant Centre
25 Victoria Square
Perth WA 6000**

**Tel: 08 9221 1727
Fax: 08 9221 3793
Email: cmc@opera.net.au**

Multicultural Schools Project

Funded by DIMIA under the Community Settlement Services Scheme, the above project of the South Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre is now in its third and final year. The project has aimed to facilitate the integration of migrant and refugee students and their families into the state education system and encourage more culturally sensitive and inclusive school communities. The project has focused on student, parent and school personnel issues within two high schools and six primary schools within the Fremantle region.

This included establishing a multicultural parent support group, delivering information sessions on school policies and procedures and getting parents involved in school activities such as canteen duty. Students were provided with information on Australian culture, assistance with the process of subject selection and information on career pathways, one school developed a peer support program. School personnel received cross cultural training and multicultural resource materials.

South Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre
241-243 High Street
Fremantle WA 6160

Tel: (08) 9335 9588
Fax: (08) 9430 6352
Website: www.fmrc.asn.au

The Australian Refugee Association's summer holiday program

The pilot summer holiday program is part of a broader program of group work at the Australian Refugee Association Inc. in Adelaide. It is based on practical and therapeutic approaches to reducing isolation and rebuilding lives by offering group sessions that target life skills. The aim is to counteract the effects of torture and trauma and to help deal with grief, isolation and loneliness.

Newly arrived teenagers and families from a refugee background have been introduced to a series of activities available to 'Australian' families but that these new arrivals were unaware of or had been unable to afford. Excursions thus far have included ice-skating, bus trips, video and pizza afternoons, and go-carting. Surfing lessons were offered to young people experiencing depression, domestic violence, problematic family relationships, and a sense of isolation.

Participants mingled with English speakers, were provided with challenges that they were able to surmount, and were encouraged to venture out of their 'comfort zone'. Families were offered opportunities to interact socially, were shown physical outlets for pent-up emotions, and were given options for activities other than smoking, drinking and medication. And they had fun!

Young refugees responded well because they felt they were being like 'normal' kids. Participants were able to see that life in Australia, although different, could provide satisfaction and hope. Families were able to 'relearn' how to interact in a healthy relationship.

**Australian Refugee Association
304 Henley Beach Road
Underdale SA 5032**

Tel: 08 8354 2951

Fax: 08 8354 2953

Email: refugee@australianrefugee.org.au

Developing partnerships

Government and local community services for refugee young people tend to be developed and funded in isolation from schools, other sectors of the community, other service providers, and the young people's families. Although schools are increasingly accountable for early intervention and the social integration of young people, they may not be correspondingly resourced. Strengthening links with parents and the wider community and acting as a source of information for future pathways to TAFE, apprenticeships, employment or higher education can assist this.

Programs such as Reconnect recognise that schools provide a good point for early intervention and assessment of young people at risk and also a linking point for many services designed for refugee young people. Refugee torture and trauma services in Sydney and Melbourne have developed and delivered many successful programs in partnership with schools and the community.

To be more flexible and holistic, funding for services could require a demonstration of how a particular service is connected to other services relevant to refugee young people and also a demonstration of accountability to these partners.

Dandenong Schools and Sports Project

The Dandenong Schools and Sports Project, based in the outer south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne, aims to link young people into sporting activities after school, on weekends and during holidays. The project targets young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, to develop positive peer support using schools as a site of engagement. It aims to create partnerships between schools, sporting clubs and non-government agencies, to promote a healthy lifestyle and to provide pathways to participation in the broader community.

Email: youthassist@infoxchange.net.au

Settlement Needs Research Project

The Northern Suburbs Migrant Resource Centre commissioned a research project into the settlement needs of culturally and linguistic the diverse young people in the Northern suburbs of Perth. The research has been used to develop new policies and practices as they apply to these young people.

The Centre is currently establishing a program to help newly arrived young people understand Australian social customs and what is "culturally appropriate" in their new environment. The pilot program will be run at Perth Modern High Schools Intensive Language Centre. The Northern Migrant Resource Centre is working with the Catholic Migrant Develop Centre to develop the curriculum for this project. The Northern Migrant Resource Centre has also established a culturally and linguistically diverse youth network, comprising local service providers (eg. local police, the Edmund Rice Centre, and other youth organisations) who will work collaboratively on other issues arising from the research project.

**Northern Suburbs Migrant Resource Centre
Unit 1, 14 Chesterfield Road
Mirrabooka WA 6061**

**Tel: 08 9345 5755
Fax: 08 9345 5036
Email: nsmrc@aceonline.com**

Building professional capacity

People working with refugee young people are the critical link between the individual and service infrastructure. Professional development and cross-cultural training for these workers is a key factor in helping refugee young people overcome cultural and linguistic barriers. Training allows for better identification and assessment of a young person's needs.

In service areas where there is little contact with young refugees, it is important that professionals have a point of contact for information and support. Large organisations such as

Centrelink and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training have officers to provide such professional support.

Developing professional capacity

The New South Wales Department of Education and Training has initiated a Refugee Resettlement Project in conjunction with STARTTS (the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors). One of the project's aims is to increase the capacity of staff to respond to the needs of young refugees and their families by:

- raising awareness among school-based personnel (teachers and executive and ancillary staff) and non-school based personnel (for example, administrators and consultants) about the refugee experience, the impact of trauma on learning and behaviour, and how schools can make families welcome
- developing for school personnel a handbook on working with refugee students
- training programs for staff.

The department also has specialists who stay in contact with counsellors in schools, provide advice, and promote the use of such programs.

**Multicultural Programs Unit
Department of Education and Training
Level 14, 1 Oxford Street
Darlinghurst NSW 2001**

Tel: 02 9244 5312

Program continuity

Continuity of care and a stable social environment help to ensure a refugee young person's success in settlement, particularly if the person's life in his or her former country was characterised by fear, disruption and uncertainty. Family and community stability is critical, as is the nature of the relationship between a worker or service and the young person.

Continuity of programs is, however, not always possible because of the nature of funding cycles and changes in government priorities. Where possible, funding grants for programs should remain for a fixed period, sufficient to facilitate good service planning and a good relationship with the young person and their family. From the service provider's point of view, maintaining programs ensures the retention of skills and assists the professional development of workers. At the same time, though, it is important that services remain flexible, economically viable and sustainable.

Appendix A Settlement services funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

DIMIA funds the following settlement services for permanent and eligible migrants and refugees:

- migrant resource centres and migrant service agencies
- a variety of community settlement services, some of which identify young people as a specific target
- the Adult Migrant English Program (encompassing adult migrant English language tuition in various states)
- the Translating and Interpreting Service

Community Settlement Services Scheme

Under the Community Services Settlement Scheme there are four nationally identified funding priorities: refugee and humanitarian entrants; small emerging communities; migrants in regional and remote areas; and groups within migrant communities who face specific, additional settlement problems and have specific, additional settlement needs.

Humanitarian settlement services

DIMIA also funds humanitarian settlement services for eligible entrants within its humanitarian and refugee programs. The Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy is designed to provide support to refugees and holders of permanent protection visas and to deliver services in an integrated manner. A range of service providers contracted by DIMIA deliver the majority of the assistance. Community Support for Refugees, which is provided by registered volunteer community groups.

The strategy incorporates a range of services, including needs assessment, information provision, material assistance, and referrals to other settlement services.

The National Forum of Services for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma provides counselling and referral services to people who have suffered torture and trauma before arriving in Australia. Funding is provided by the Department of Health and Ageing (Program for Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma), state and territory governments, and DIMIA.

In the current policy context, settlement services are provided for new arrivals who have permanent residence status. Some people who hold temporary visas (including temporary protection visas) have access to a limited range of services, depending on the conditions attached to their visa.

Appendix B Acknowledgments

The Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council extends its sincere thanks to the participating government representatives, youth workers and humanitarian workers for their commitment to improving services for refugee young people. Without their willingness to share ideas, experiences and knowledge, this initiative would not have been possible.

Following is a list of organisations who participated in the development of this document and contributed case studies.

Australian Refugee Association

Australian Transcultural Mental Health Network

Australasian Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau

Cabramatta Anglicare

- JPET
- Reconnect
- Young Offenders Program
- Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Services program

Cabramatta Community Centre (New South Wales)

Catholic Migrant Centre

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (Victoria)

Centrelink

- multicultural services (New South Wales)
- youth and students, (national office)

Companion House (ACT)

Department of Education, Science and Training

- New Apprenticeships (national office)
- Youth Bureau (national office)
- literacy and special programs (national office)
- state office- Victoria
- state office- New South Wales

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

- employment programs (national office)
- Job Network (national office)
- Welfare Reform and Youth Policy (national office)
- state office- New South Wales

Department of Family and Community Services

- youth and students (national office)
- state office- New South Wales

Department of Health and Ageing

- drug strategy and population health (national office)
- mental health (national office)
- multicultural health policy

Department of Community Services (New South Wales)

Department of Education, Employment and Training (Victoria)
Department of Education and Training (New South Wales)
Department of Health (New South Wales)
Department of Housing (New South Wales)
Multicultural Liaison, Police Department (New South Wales)
Northern Suburbs Migrant Resource Centre (West Australia)
Office of Children and Young People, Department of Premier and Cabinet
(New South Wales)
Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma
Refugee Health Service (New South Wales)
Refugee Council of Australia
NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma
Survivors
South Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre (West Australia)
Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (Victoria)
Torture and Trauma Survivors Service of the Northern Territory
Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture
VicHealth
Victorian Co-operative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups
Welfare Rights Centre (New South Wales)
Whitelion Inc.
Youth Action & Policy Association of New South Wales
Youth Affairs Network of Queensland

Appendix C Useful websites

Australians Working Together
<http://www.together.gov.au>

The Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society
http://www.immi.gov.au/multicultural/_inc/publications/charter/charter.htm

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
<http://www.cmyi.net.au>

Jobs Placement, Employment and Training program
<http://jpet.facs.gov.au/index.asp>

Mind Matters
<http://www.health.gov.au/hsdd/mentalhe/resources/mindmatters/index.htm>

National Children's and Youth Law Centre
<http://www.ncylc.org.au/>

National Forum for Survivors of Torture and Trauma
http://www.swsahs.nsw.gov.au/areaser/startts/aboutus/national_forum.asp

Reconnect Young Refugees
http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/youth-eoi_reconnect.htm

Settlement services and strategies, including the *Settlement Services Guide* and *Settling in Australia*
<http://www.immi.gov.au/settle>

Settlement Database
<http://www.immi.gov.au/settle/data/sdb.html>

The Source
<http://www.thesource.gov.au/index.htm>

Stronger Families and Stronger Communities Strategies
<http://www.facs.gov.au/sfcs/index.htm>

Torture and trauma services
<http://www.atmhn.unimelb.edu.au/organisations/organisations.html>

Youth Information Pages
<http://www.immi.gov.au/settle/youth>

Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce
<http://www.youthpathways.gov.au>