

How you can help migrants and humanitarian entrants

A Volunteer's Guide



Australian Government

Department of Immigration and
Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council



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South Central Region Migrant Resource Centre

Foreword

On behalf of the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council, I am proud to introduce this guide for volunteers working with migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants.

Volunteers have played a significant role in the settlement of migrants and humanitarian entrants throughout Australia's modern history. Australia's settlement programs are widely regarded as the most successful and well-integrated in the world—the importance of volunteers to this success is unquestionable.

The assistance and support volunteers provide, from the moment a new arrival gets off the plane, has a clear practical benefit, but it also has a deeper symbolism. Volunteers assisting migrants and humanitarian entrants represent everything that is worthwhile about the Australian sense of community. With their support, new arrivals are able to take their first steps towards establishing links within a local community, links that over time become the true measure of integration.

Volunteers from new and emerging communities are particularly important in this process. By sharing with new arrivals their unique knowledge and experience of adjusting to life in Australia, they effectively become a bridge between two cultures.

I commend this guide to all volunteers and organisations working with migrants and humanitarian entrants. Mostly, however, I commend it to prospective volunteers. You will make lifetime friendships, and learn about new people, places and cultures. Most significantly, you will make a real and positive difference to the lives of the new arrivals you work with.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warren Glenny'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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



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Introduction



Who is this Guide for?

This Guide aims to encourage people from all walks of life to volunteer to assist migrants and humanitarian entrants as they settle into the Australian community. Whatever your cultural background, skills and experience, you are able to make an important contribution to helping new arrivals adjust to life in Australia.

What are the objectives of the Guide?

The Guide will:

- raise your awareness of the settlement challenges faced by migrants and humanitarian entrants
- show the variety of ideas and approaches to volunteering in settlement services in Australia
- encourage your involvement in volunteering with migrants and humanitarian entrants
- give you an idea of the basic principles of volunteering
- ensure that you understand your rights and responsibilities as a volunteer and
- provide practical suggestions on how to get started.

Australia's migrants and humanitarian entrants

Australia has worked hard for many decades to build a fair and flexible migration system which suits our social and economic needs, and through the humanitarian program also meets our international obligations.

Australia's Migration Program

Australia's Migration Program has two main categories:

- the *Skill Stream*, for people with particular skills or talents and
- the *Family Stream*, for people joining family members who are already living in Australia.

In 2004–05, there were 77,880 people granted Skill Stream visas, an increase of 9.3 per cent from 2003–04. Within the Skill Stream, migrants' main countries of citizenship were the United Kingdom, India, the People's Republic of China, South Africa and Malaysia. There were 41,740 people granted Family Stream visas in 2004–05. Within the Family Stream, migrants' mainly came from the United Kingdom, the People's Republic of China, the Philippines, India and Vietnam.

Australia's Humanitarian Program

Australia has one of the three largest humanitarian programs in the world, alongside the USA and Canada. Australia's Humanitarian Program helps to fulfil our international obligations under the Refugees Convention, and has two components:

- the *offshore* component offers resettlement as a means of protection for people in humanitarian need who are overseas and have no other option available to them and
- the *onshore* component offers protection for people already in Australia, who arrived on temporary visas or in an unauthorised manner, and who meet the definition of a refugee in the Refugees Convention.

The make-up of Australia's Humanitarian Program has changed substantially in recent years in response to shifting crisis points and resettlement need across the world. The Humanitarian Program is currently focused on Africa.

Of the 13,000 places available under Australia's Humanitarian Program in 2004–05, around 70 per cent were granted to entrants from Africa. This trend is expected to continue in 2005–06. During 2004–05, humanitarian entrants also came from the Middle East and South West Asia (around 26 per cent), Asia and the Pacific (around 3 per cent), and Europe and America (around 0.2 per cent).

The challenges faced by migrants and humanitarian entrants settling in Australia

Moving to a new country is often a difficult and stressful experience. Homesickness, culture shock and a sense of isolation can all affect the ease with which a person is able to settle in Australia. These issues are compounded when a person does not speak English well.

Many people arriving in Australia under the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs' (the department's) Migration and Humanitarian Programs need assistance in overcoming these challenges. The level of support they need depends on each person's circumstances, both before coming to Australia and once they arrive.

Experiences before arrival can affect how quickly and easily a person can adapt to life in Australia. This is particularly true of humanitarian entrants who might:

- have experienced high levels of poverty
- be suffering from the effects of torture and trauma
- have low levels of formal education and
- have no or little English language skills.

Many recently arrived humanitarian entrants have spent long periods in refugee camps before coming to Australia. They may have no experience in renting a home, maintaining a western style house, or managing a budget. They may be unfamiliar with urban environments, and with the Australian way of life generally. They will also need assistance to find their way around the variety of Australian government and community services.

Just as importantly, the roles of mothers, fathers and children can change significantly on arriving in Australia, and this can place enormous stress on the family.

What do migrants and humanitarian entrants need to do when they first arrive in Australia?

When they arrive in Australia, migrants and humanitarian entrants may need to:

- find somewhere to live
- find work or establish some form of income
- enrol children in school
- access health services
- work out how to run a western-style house (using electricity, modern appliances, etc)
- learn how to budget
- develop English language skills
- use translating and interpreting services
- connect with local migrant and humanitarian entrant communities
- access appropriate information about their new environment (eg public transport, location of shops) and
- generally begin to develop a relationship with the Australian community.

Regional settlement

Migrants and humanitarian entrants settling in regional areas will often face particular difficulties, and welcome the help of volunteers. These difficulties may include:

- the culture shock may be greater in rural and regional areas where there is likely to be less cultural diversity, and fewer ethnic clubs and associations to help support entrants when they arrive
- a lack of places of worship for non-Christians and
- a lack of specialist services, such as torture and trauma counselling.

Australia's settlement services

The aim of settlement services

Settlement services funded by the department focus on building self-reliance, developing English language skills, and fostering connections with mainstream services as soon as possible after arrival.

Many of the on-arrival and longer-term needs of migrants are shared with the wider Australian community, such as health, education and welfare. Because of this, all government agencies are responsible for delivering services which are responsive to our culturally diverse community.

Settlement services funded by the department provide some additional assistance to help new arrivals to become accustomed to life in Australia. For individual migrants, this includes the provision of pre-embarkation and on-arrival information about life in Australia, as well as more specialised support services for arrivals in need of greater assistance. The department also recognises the importance of learning English, and puts significant resources into the Adult Migrant English Program.

Broadly, services are provided to eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants:

- when they arrive, through the provision of information on living in Australia, and, when more intensive assistance is required for humanitarian entrants, through the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS)
- after their initial settlement period, through migrant community services and
- to assist with their language needs, through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) and the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National).

For a more detailed explanation of the programs above, please see the *Appendix – Settlement programs funded by the department* on page 24.

How can volunteering help?



By working with government and non-government-funded organisations, volunteers can help migrants and humanitarian entrants to settle into the Australian community.

Volunteers can provide a warm welcome to new arrivals when they first come to Australia, and can help them overcome the anxieties associated with moving to a foreign environment.

After familiarising themselves with Australian society and culture, migrants and humanitarian entrants may still need help in other areas, such as learning English, establishing social and community networks, and finding employment. Volunteers have a critical role to play in helping to address these challenges.

Volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds often have first hand experience of the settlement process and its impact, and can help by providing new arrivals and fellow volunteers with personal insight based on their own experience.

The move towards increased regional settlement brings with it an increased need for settlement services in regional areas, and the increased opportunity to volunteer. The additional isolation that can be felt by new arrivals in regional areas makes the role of the volunteer even more important.



Irene Ross, centre with staff.

"Our volunteers provide strong support for new arrivals in areas such as English conversation, computer classes, and homework support."

Irene Ross

Irene Ross knows first hand how important volunteers are to helping new arrivals settle successfully in Australia.

As manager of Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in Sydney, she and her 70 volunteers work with one of the largest migrant populations in NSW.

More than 82 000 people living in the Blacktown area were born overseas.

"Our role is to help refugees and new arrivals become familiar with the cultural norms of our society and to assist organisations become more aware and able to respond to their needs.

"Housing, education and employment are some of the basics people need to function in society. But without assistance new arrivals are often unable to access these services in an unfamiliar or a new environment."

Volunteers play an essential role in supporting Australian Government funded MRCs by responding to the particular needs of refugees, such as driving them to government departments, explaining the public transport system and being a social support.

According to Irene, a lack of understanding and awareness are the major hurdles to the successful settlement of refugees in Australia.

"Working with new communities has made me and MRC staff and volunteers see things through new eyes. Often we expect people to function like us.

"There are many things that are normal for us, but not for people coming over here."

Blacktown MRC's growing list of volunteers complement Australian Government settlement programs such as the Adult Migrant English program (AMEP), which gives refugees and migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds access to basic language tuition.

"Communication is vital in order to be able to participate more fully in our society. Our volunteers provide strong support for new arrivals in areas such as English conversation, computer classes, and homework support.

"We get a lot of refugee students who have had disrupted schooling before coming to Australia and homework support is vital for them. We couldn't help them without the support of volunteers."

Volunteering also offered new arrivals a stepping stone back into the paid workforce by providing the work experience necessary to obtain a job.

"There are many different ways we can achieve the desired outcomes for all concerned, and volunteering is one of them."

What do volunteers currently do?



Thousands of volunteers assist migrants and humanitarian entrants as they adjust to Australian life, and there are many opportunities for new volunteers to get involved. These opportunities can generally be divided into:

- on-arrival assistance to refugee and other humanitarian entrants and
- on-going assistance to migrants and humanitarian entrants.

The following examples show the range of the contribution that volunteers can make to migrant and humanitarian settlement.

As you read about these opportunities, you may wish to:

- consider the skills you can offer
- recognise your motivations, expectations and interests and
- assess the time you are able to commit to volunteering.

On-arrival assistance to humanitarian entrants

Humanitarian entrants' on-arrival needs are considerable, and volunteers play a significant role in helping entrants gain the basic skills necessary to adjust to their new surroundings. A warm welcome and practical assistance with unfamiliar tasks can help new arrivals to settle, particularly when they first arrive in Australia.

Many of the on-arrival assistance to humanitarian entrants is provided through IHSS service providers. Depending upon the needs of humanitarian entrants, and the volunteer arrangements put in place by service providers, volunteers may assist in several ways, including:

- meeting humanitarian entrants at the airport and taking them to their initial accommodation
- offering companionship and friendship to humanitarian entrants who have few, if any, personal contacts in Australia
- helping to familiarise humanitarian entrants who are not used to urban environments with amenities such as electricity (eg toasters and microwaves), gas stoves, telephones, flush toilets, and running water
- explaining the costs and billing procedures for amenities like electricity, phone and water
- assisting humanitarian entrants to establish a bank account, apply for Medicare, register with Centrelink, and apply for a driver's licence
- helping humanitarian entrants to use public places like shopping centres, libraries, councils, medical centres, and pharmacies
- familiarising humanitarian entrants with Australian foods and cooking methods, particularly if their usual staple foods are not easily available in Australia
- helping to find shops that sell familiar products
- assisting parents to enrol children in school, and providing them with guidance about the Australian school system and schooling practices and responsibilities (eg packing lunches, school times, uniforms, school supplies, school holidays, and interaction with teachers/principal)
- linking humanitarian entrants to relevant ethnic, community, or religious associations and organisations and relevant places of worship
- assisting new arrivals to use the public transport system, including reading timetables, bus routes and buying tickets
- explaining emergency services and how to contact them
- allaying any fears and misconceptions about the role of people in positions of authority (eg police, fire brigade, doctors, government officials, teachers, and school principals)
- helping humanitarian entrants to find permanent accommodation, and explaining rental practices including maintaining a western-style home
- assisting in transporting humanitarian entrants to and from doctor's and other appointments and/or
- helping to familiarise humanitarian entrants with Australian cultural practices and social norms like shaking hands when meeting new people, and maintaining eye contact in conversation.

On-going assistance to migrants and humanitarian entrants



Beyond these initial needs, new arrivals may still require on-going support and assistance to help them adjust to life in Australia, and to access available services.

Volunteers can help by:

- assisting migrants and humanitarian entrants to fill in forms or provide other documentation
- teaching new arrivals English and providing advice and support through the Home Tutor Scheme
- assisting school-aged children with homework
- developing migrants' and humanitarian entrants' computer literacy through classes or tuition
- introducing entrants to community groups and ethnic associations
- practising English conversation
- organising and running community information sessions (eg on the Australian legal system, Australian government, the role of police, or accessing the health system)
- providing information about available settlement services such as TIS, MRCs and MSAs, CSSS-funded organisations, and the AMEP
- promoting anti-racism and participating in Living in Harmony activities in their community
- mentoring migrants and humanitarian entrants (eg academic or career development) and/or
- aiding participation in every day activities (eg visiting movies, museums, and involvement in sport and outdoor recreation).

Eugenia Tsoulis



Fatma (left) and Eugenia (right).

"As they settle the volunteers are able to assist and support other Humanitarian entrants, and also build leadership and training skills within emerging communities."

The South Australia Migrant Resource Centre has developed an innovative program to assist volunteers from new and emerging communities help themselves.

Volunteers who work at the centre undergo a formal recruitment and training process to learn about the demands of the Australian workforce.

Centre Executive Director Eugenia Tsoulis said the process was designed to help volunteers develop their job-seeking and employment skills while helping other new arrivals settle into the Australian community.

"The volunteers are mostly people who have been in Australia for two or three years. They are people from Africa, the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia, who want to support their own communities," Eugenia said.

"As they settle the volunteers are able to assist and support other Humanitarian entrants, and also build leadership and training skills within emerging communities."

Developed in the late 1990s, the volunteer recruitment program operated in a similar manner to the centre's process for employing salaried staff.

Applicants were asked to provide an account of their work experience, attend an interview, undergo a police check and sign a contract with a privacy clause.

"Many people from new and emerging communities have no sense of Australia's bureaucratic system and its needs for accountability," Eugenia said.

"Working at the centre they learn skills critical for the general workplace—the rules and regulations, occupational health and safety, industrial relations, the need to write reports, fill out forms such as those for expenses and mileage.

"The process aims to help them lessen their dependency on interpreters by encouraging them to become involved in day to day matters of the contemporary workplace."

Somalian refugee Fatma Sheikh, 42, had no formal education when she joined the volunteer program in 2001. A mother of one, she relied heavily on her husband's English speaking skills when she came to Adelaide in 1997.

Now studying for a family day care certificate at TAFE, while volunteering at the centre, Fatma says the program changed her life.

"It gave me the confidence. I'm going to school for the first time in my life and enjoying meeting people and making friends," Fatma said.

Volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

All Australians can volunteer to help migrants and humanitarian entrants settle in Australia. Volunteers from CALD backgrounds, though, are able to make a unique and important contribution to the settlement experiences of new arrivals.

They can do this in several ways, including:

- communicating information about available services to non-English speaking migrants and humanitarian entrants
- offering companionship, conversation and general understanding to non-English speaking migrants
- sharing their experiences of settlement with newer arrivals or
- helping to establish ethnic community associations or organise community events.



Multicultural Australia

Australia's cultural and linguistic diversity is one of its greatest assets. Australia has welcomed more than six million migrants since 1945, to help build the prosperous and peaceful nation Australians enjoy today. More than 630,000 of these arrivals have come to Australia under our Humanitarian Program.

Today, Australia's population is about 20 million people, with around 43 per cent either born overseas or with at least one parent born overseas. We have around 185 ancestries and speak over 200 languages. After English, the most common languages spoken are Italian, Greek, Cantonese, Arabic, Vietnamese and Mandarin.

The Australian Government's multicultural programs respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by our cultural diversity. You can find more information at www.immi.gov.au/multicultural

James and Jane Onek



James and Jane Onek

"It's hard to come to a strange new place. The volunteers help you because they have friendly faces and have the same experiences as we do."

James and Jane Onek and their five children are not that different to many other families in Riverton, Perth.

James is studying sustainable development at University and Jane looks after their children, the youngest of whom is just two years old.

The difference is that the family moved to Riverton one year ago from a refugee camp in Kenya after having earlier fled their home in Sudan.

James said he's had to learn many things during the past year, but he had a lot of help from other refugees who volunteer their time to help new arrivals to Australia.

"It's hard to come to a strange new place. The volunteers help you because they have friendly faces and have the same experiences as we do," James said.

"They helped us with bank accounts, accommodation and some food and money until we got set up. They can teach you how to catch a bus or a train—some things you don't know how to do if you're new in a city or country.

"The church we go to has also helped us make friends, some people who have been here longer than us were able to help us fit in better," he said.

Jane and her older children are learning to speak English. Jane studies with the AMEP, and the children study English at school.

"The most important thing for us right now is to be able to speak English well and be able to fit in here in Perth," James said.

James hopes to complete his studies in the next couple of years, find work and help his children get an education. Jane plans to finish her English classes and look after the younger children until they are at school, when she will also get a job—perhaps helping other refugees when they arrive in Australia.

Cultural sensitivity in volunteering

There are many other ways in which volunteers can assist migrants and humanitarian entrants. Many community organisations have taken a creative approach to meeting community needs. Volunteers can assist in diverse ways like establishing a singing group to develop English language skills, or assisting new arrivals to learn to drive.

In accessing these opportunities it is important to recognise that many new arrivals will be facing the challenge of adjusting to the unfamiliar way of life that they encounter in Australia. You may also be exposed to cultural practices and beliefs that differ from your own. This can be an excellent opportunity for cultural exchange—sharing information and experiences about each other’s traditions and ways of life.

If you are sensitive to the differences of other cultures, it will help to make new arrivals feel more at ease with their new surroundings.

The settlement service provider/s in your region can give you more information about the nationality and

cultural background of the migrants and humanitarian entrants they support, and practical advice on how to be culturally sensitive with new arrivals.

Generally, you can demonstrate cultural awareness and sensitivity by:

- showing respect for other people’s cultural practices and beliefs
- being conscious of your dress, language and tone of voice
- being aware of your facial expressions, eye contact, posture, body language and gestures
- being aware of your use of slang words, speaking too quickly and inappropriate humour
- where language barriers exist, making an effort to communicate in the most effective way possible (eg speaking slowly and clearly or engaging an interpreter where appropriate) and
- expressing interest rather than surprise about points of cultural difference.

Using established settlement services

Your best opportunity to make an effective contribution to migrant and humanitarian settlement is through involvement with an organised settlement service provider, which has established volunteer programs. These service providers have experience in assisting volunteers, and will:

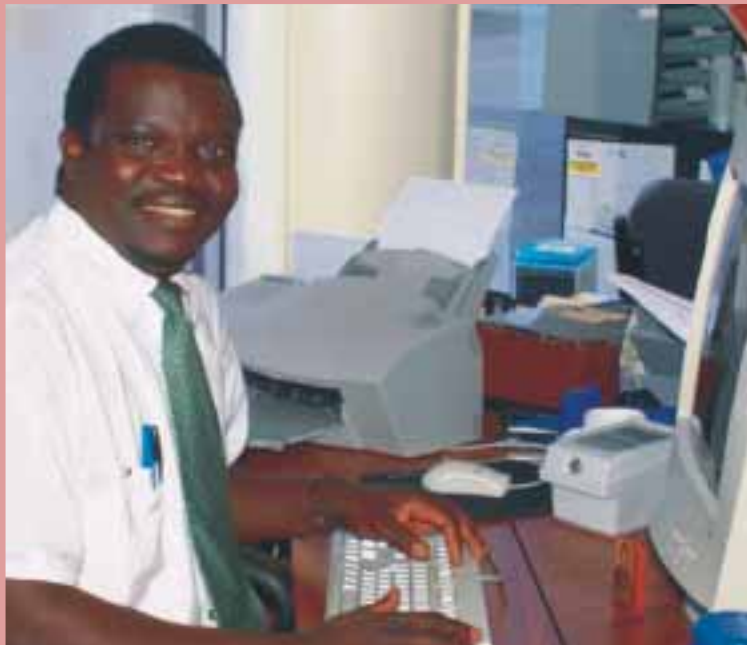
- provide you with volunteer training, co-ordination and support
- link you to migrants and humanitarian entrants most in need of assistance
- match your skills, interests and availability to a specific volunteer role
- involve both you and the migrant or

humanitarian entrant in the wider network of settlement services and programs and

- provide insurance and liability cover.

If you are interested in volunteering in humanitarian and migrant settlement, you will need to undergo police and working with children checks. You may also need to attend an interview with a settlement service provider.

To find out what opportunities are available, contact a service provider or community organisation in your area. (See the “Getting started” section of this Guide for more information).



Principles of volunteering

- volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer
- volunteer work is unpaid
- volunteering is always a matter of choice
- volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances
- volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community
- volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs
- volunteering is an activity performed in the not for profit sector only
- volunteering is not a substitute for paid work
- volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers
- volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others
- volunteering promotes human rights and equality.

(Source: Volunteering Australia)

Why volunteer?

As well as helping migrants and humanitarian entrants to settle in Australia, volunteering can be rewarding for you.

Volunteering with migrants and humanitarian entrants can give you:

- a fuller understanding of the challenges facing migrants and humanitarian entrants, and ways to meet those challenges
- the satisfaction of providing assistance to individuals and the community
- opportunities to develop skills
- opportunities to develop friendships and contacts
- experience in working with community organisations and a greater understanding of their structure and processes
- workplace experience and potential pathways to employment and
- opportunities to learn about new cultures.

Volunteers from CALD backgrounds may benefit further by:

- learning more about the Australian workplace environment
- developing workplace skills and gaining an Australian-based reference
- practising English
- meeting people and building networks;
- assisting with building the capacity of their own community
- sharing personal settlement experiences and drawing on these experiences to assist new arrivals and
- participating in and feeling valued by a new community.



You do not need to spend a large amount of time to make a real difference to how easily and quickly new arrivals settle into the Australian community. By volunteering for only a few hours a fortnight, you can make a valuable contribution to the settlement of migrants and humanitarian entrants.

Mary Riek



Mary Riek

"The main barrier is language. Most of the people come from refugee camps and Australia is a culture shock to them. They need a lot of education."

Mary Riek loves breaking barriers and making new connections in her community.

Mary is a linguist for the Australian Government's Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) and a caseworker for the South Central Region Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in Oakleigh, Melbourne. Mary also volunteers, and leads by example to help members of the Sudanese community settle successfully in Australia.

"It's very confusing for people when they arrive in a new country, and the practical help of volunteers can make a big difference, even in little things like showing mothers what to pack for their children's school lunch.

"In Sudan children usually come home for lunch, not stay at school to eat. Some people have come from places where bills are paid once a year, not quarterly like here in Australia.

"Volunteers can be helpful in these situations by orientating people into the system and providing reassurance."

Mary was one of the first Sudanese women to get a driver's license when she arrived in Australia in 1995, after being sponsored by her husband.

"There were only a few Sudanese families here when I got to Australia and the women were isolated at home, not knowing where to go for help and support.

"After I got my driver's license, I was then free to go out and take the children to school. Most of the women now drive because they see the benefit of having freedom.

"The main barrier is language. Most of the people come from refugee camps and Australia is a culture shock to them. They need a lot of education.

"People know that they can get help from the MRCs and MSAs (Migrant Service Agencies). These services help people overcome their language difficulties when they want to go to places like hospitals."

Mary says the most rewarding part of her job is helping someone who cannot communicate to connect with the community.

"The MRCs are very supportive. They help the women to get out of their houses, meet with each other and teach their children to know one another better.

"I love my work and I'm happy to have this opportunity to use my experience to help others. I have something that not everyone has—a unique culture, a love of what I have, and a love of the other people in my community. I want to share my uniqueness with the rest of Australia."

Your rights and responsibilities as a volunteer

Volunteering Australia promotes the following as the rights of the volunteer. As a volunteer you have a right:

- to work in a healthy and safe environment (refer to the various Occupational Health and Safety Act[s])
- to be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- to be adequately covered by insurance
- to be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation for which you are working
- to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses
- to be given a copy of the organisation's volunteer policy and any other policy that affects your work
- not to fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- not to do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes
- to have a job description and agreed working hours
- to have access to a grievance procedure
- to be provided with orientation to the organisation
- to have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988 and
- to be provided with sufficient training to do your job.

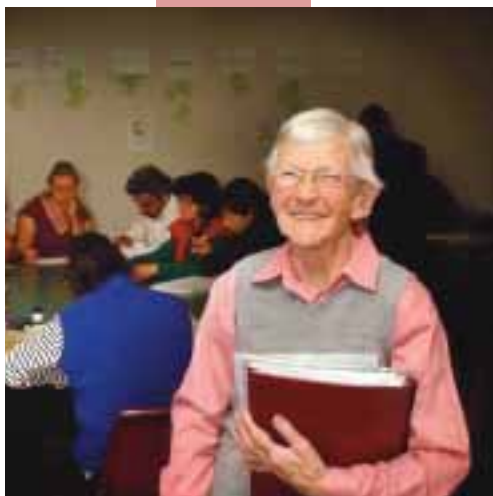
As a volunteer you are responsible for:

- seeking volunteer opportunities appropriate to your values, skills, interests and aspirations
- being reliable and arriving on time
- dealing with confidential and personal information appropriately
- supporting the organisation you are working with, and representing its interests
- making appropriate arrangements with your organisation if you stop volunteering
- carrying out the specific job description
- staying within the limits of your role
- undertaking training and
- asking for support when it is needed.

What legislation affects volunteers?

Legislation affecting volunteers differs between states and territories. For details of your state or territory legislation, contact your local Volunteer Centre (contact details are on page 23).

Janet Kirkley



Janet Kirkley

"I love volunteering. I think I get more out of the classes than the students. Their appreciation and gratitude make it so worthwhile."

Janet Kirkley thought she had seen her last classroom when she retired as a Victorian high school teacher in 1975.

Now, 30 years later Janet, 80, is back in front of a class and loving the rewards of being a volunteer teacher's aid for the Australian Government's Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

"It beats high school teaching. It gives me contact with younger people and I'm learning more about the English language from the questions I receive in class."

The former librarian/English teacher has worked in AMEP classes at Caboolture TAFE since 1999. She became interested in becoming a volunteer after seeing an advertisement in a local paper.

"I did a 10-week training course and 50 hours of practical classes before gaining a certificate to help teachers in the classroom.

"I started off going one day a week but because they needed volunteers it ended up being two days a week from 9am to 2.30pm."

Janet helps a range of students from refugees and recent arrivals on permanent visas to women who have married Australian men and need to improve their English.

"Sometimes it's extremely difficult to make yourself understood, particularly if you are helping someone who has no English language skills, or is used to Arabic, where writing is from right to left.

"We have lots of laughs together and we give the students lots of encouragement. It is very exciting when you see progress."

Janet, who came to Australia from Kent in southern England in 1956 as a 'Ten Pound Pom', understands many of the adjustments new arrivals need to make to settle successfully in Australia.

As well as teaching English, she often discusses Australian culture and lifestyle to help the students, from 17 countries, understand the social aspects of their new home.

"I love volunteering. I think I get more out of the classes than the students. Their appreciation and gratitude make it so worthwhile.

"They laid on a fabulous surprise 80th birthday party for me. There were speeches, music, presents, a birthday cake and great food. I have never had so many hugs and kisses in my life."

Getting started

Who do I need to talk to?

Are you interested in volunteering to assist migrants and humanitarian entrants as they settle in the Australian community? You can start by talking to the following organisations available to volunteers in your local area. Check your local directories for contact details.

Migrant community service providers

Contact details for, and information about Migrant Resource Centres/Migrant Service Agencies, organisations funded under the Community Settlement Services Scheme, and organisations funded under the Settlement Grants Program, can be found at www.immi.gov.au/grants

Adult Migrant English Program – Home Tutor Scheme

NEW SOUTH WALES

ACL Pty Ltd
Program Manager
2/7 Hassall Street PARRAMATTA NSW 2150
Phone (02) 9635 1543 Fax (02) 9635 1534
Email nessp@missionaustralia.com.au
Website www.acl.edu.au

NSW Adult Migrant English Service (AMES)
Home Tutor Scheme Coordinator
Level 2 29–31 Belmore Street BURWOOD NSW 2134
Phone (02) 9277 3188 Fax (02) 9715 3839
Email hts@smithfamily.com.au
Website www.smithfamily.com.au

VICTORIA

Adult Multicultural Education Services
Home Tutor Scheme Coordinator
289 Barker Street FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011
Phone (03) 9687 3494 Fax (03) 9689 9851
Website www.ames.edu.au

Northern Adult Migrant English Program
Home Tutor Scheme Coordinator
NMIT, Epping Campus
Corner of Dalton Road and Cooper Street
EPPING VIC 3076
Phone (03) 9269 1012 Fax (03) 9269 1011
Email name@nmit.vic.edu.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

West Coast College of TAFE
Home Tutor Scheme Coordinator
Level 4 14–16 Victoria Avenue PERTH WA 6000
Phone (08) 9229 3630 Fax (08) 9229 3639
Email htames@ames.training.wa.gov.au

QUEENSLAND

TAFE Queensland
Home Tutor Scheme Coordinator
English Language and Literacy Services
Level 5 288 Edward Street BRISBANE QLD 4000
Phone (07) 3234 1693 Fax (07) 3234 1655
Email TELLS@det.qld.gov.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

AIT English Language Services
Home Tutor Scheme Coordinator
5th Floor Renaissance Centre
127 Rundle Mall ADELAIDE SA 5000
Phone (08) 8226 6555 Fax (08) 8226 6882
Email els.hometutor@ait.org

TASMANIA

Adult Migrant English Service, TAFE Tasmania
Team Leader, AMEP Language Program
26 Bathurst Street HOBART TAS 7000
Phone (03) 6233 7119 Fax (03) 6233 7914

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Canberra Institute of Technology
Home Tutor Scheme Coordinator
Reid Campus, Building J
Corner Constitution Avenue and Coranderrk Street
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Phone (02) 6205 9611 Fax (02) 6205 9699

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Charles Darwin University
Home Tutor Scheme Coordinator
Centre for Access, Faculty for Health and Science
DARWIN NT 0909
Phone (08) 8946 6059 Fax (08) 8946 7055

IHSS SERVICE PROVIDERS 2005–2010 PUBLIC CONTACT DETAILS

State / Territory	Region	Service Providers	Contact Details
NSW	Northern Metropolitan (includes Blacktown, Parramatta, Auburn and suburbs up to and including Newcastle)	The Australian Centre for Languages Pty Ltd (ACL) IHSS Consortium	(02) 9252 3788 enquiry@acl.edu.au
	Southern Metropolitan (includes Liverpool, Campbelltown, Fairfield and down to and including Shoalhaven)	The Australian Centre for Languages Pty Ltd (ACL) IHSS Consortium	(02) 9252 3788 enquiry@acl.edu.au
	Rural NSW (centred on Coffs Harbour and covers rural areas not managed from either ACT or SA)	Anglicare Sydney	(02) 9755 0233 cabramatta@anglicare.org.au cumberland@anglicare.org.au
VICTORIA	Eastern Metropolitan (includes Greater Dandenong, Casey and Whitehorse)	Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) IHSS Consortium	1800 500 962 enquiries@ames.net.au
	Western Metropolitan (includes Maribyrnong, Hume, Brimbank and Moonee Valley)	Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) IHSS Consortium	1800 500 962 enquiries@ames.net.au
	Rural Victoria (includes Greater Geelong)	Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) IHSS Consortium	1800 500 962 enquiries@ames.net.au
QLD	Metropolitan Brisbane (includes Ipswich and up to and including the Sunshine Coast)	Multicultural Development Association (MDA) Consortium	(07) 3394 9300 mailbox@mdabne.org.au
	Toowoomba	Anglicare Southern Queensland	(07) 4639 3983 anglicare@optusnet.com.au
	Logan/Gold Coast	Assisting Collaborative Community Employment Services Inc. (ACCES)	(07) 3808 9299 mrc@accessservicesinc.org.au
	Cairns, Innisfail and surrounds	Centacare Cairns	(07) 4041 7699 migrantservices@centacarecairns.org
	Townsville and surrounds	Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc	(07) 4775 1588 tmsg@beyond.net.au

State / Territory	Region	Service Providers	Contact Details
SA	Northern Metropolitan and Rural (includes Salisbury, Enfield and Port Adelaide)	South Australian Multicultural Settlement Services (SAMCSS) Consortium	(08) 8217 9500 admin@mrca.com.au
	Western and Southern Metropolitan (includes Charles Sturt, West Torrens and Marion)	South Australian Multicultural Settlement Services (SAMCSS) Consortium	(08) 8217 9500 admin@mrca.com.au
WA	Northern Metropolitan and Rural North (WA north of the Swan River; includes Stirling and Wanneroo)	Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre	(08) 9345 5755 admin@mrcwa.org.au
	Southern Metropolitan and Rural South (WA south of the Swan River)	Centrecare Migrant Services	(08) 9221 1727 receptionm@centrecare.com.au
TAS	Northern Tasmania (includes Launceston, Devonport, and North West Coast)	MRC Northern Tasmania	(03) 6631 2300 kerry.clough@mrcltn.org.au
	Southern Tasmania (includes Hobart, Clarence, Brighton and Glenorchy)	Centacare Tasmania	(03) 6278 1660 centacare.hobart@achtas.org.au
ACT and surrounds	ACT (includes Goulburn/Yass/Queanbeyan/South Coast)	Centacare Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn Consortium	(02) 6162 6100 carolyn.joyce@centacare-canberra.org
	Riverina (includes Wagga Wagga, Albury-Wodonga and Griffith)	SVDP Consortium	(02) 6971 7175 deidre.moulden@vinnies.org.au
NT	NT	Melaleuca Refugee Centre, Torture and Trauma Survivors Service of the NT Inc	(08) 8985 3311 admin@melaleuca.org.au

See Appendix on page 24 for more information on the IHSS

About the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council (RRAC)

RRAC advises the Australian Government Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs on the settlement of refugees, humanitarian entrants and migrants. It focuses on providing advice on the appropriateness and adequacy of services, especially to refugees.

Contact details

Major General Warren Glenny

AO RFD ED (Rtd)

Chair – RRAC

Dr Mohammed Alsalami

Chairperson

Organisation of Human Rights in Iraq

PO Box 923 FAIRFIELD NSW 1860

Mr Paris Aristotle AM

Director

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Home of the Victorian Foundation for

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6 Gardiner Street BRUNSWICK VIC 3056

Phone (03) 9388 0022

Ms Carmel Guerra

Director

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues

Level 1/308 Drummond Street CARLTON VIC 3053

Phone (03) 9349 3466

Mr Kevin Liston

Director

Australian Refugee Association Inc

304 Henley Beach Road UNDERDALE SA 5032

Phone (08) 8354 2951

Ms Margaret Piper

Executive Director

Refugee Council of Australia

37–47 St. Johns Road GLEBE NSW 2037

Phone (02) 9660 5300

Mrs Jeannie Mok

Foundation Principal, Managing Director

Asian Pacific Institute

Director (Volunteer) Multicultural Community Centre

977 Ann Street FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006

Phone (07) 3257 1868

Ms Irene Ross

Director – Blacktown MRC

Level 2, 125 Main Street BLACKTOWN NSW 2148

Phone (02) 9621 6633

Mr Mohamed Abdi

Child Safety Officer

Department of Child Safety, Queensland

6 Ewing Road WOODRIDGE QLD 4114

Phone (07) 3380 6286

Where do I go for more general information?

There are a number of places you can go to find out more about volunteering generally, including:

Go Volunteer

www.govolunteer.com.au

GoVolunteer is Australia's first national volunteer recruitment website, providing volunteers with a starting point to match their skills and interests with organisations' needs.

Volunteering Australia

www.volunteeringaustralia.org

Volunteering Australia (VA) is the national peak body working to encourage and promote volunteering in the Australian community. The VA website hosts a variety of information relevant to volunteers including: events, publications, and information sheets for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

VA's network consists of state and territory volunteering centres and a network of regional volunteer resource centres located around Australia. These centres provide volunteer matching and referral services. For the contact details of these centres see: www.volunteeringaustralia.org/about/vanetwork.html or if you do not have access to the internet, contact Volunteering Australia on (03) 9820 4100 and they will be able to provide the contact details of your local centre.

Living in Harmony

See Living in Harmony grant winners to find one in your city, town or region: www.harmony.gov.au/grants/index.htm

A good way to begin raising awareness in your community may be to organise some activities to celebrate Harmony Day on 21 March each year. For more information, see: www.harmony.gov.au/harmony.htm

Department of Family and Community Services

The Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) manages a range of programs specifically supporting volunteers and volunteering. These include the Voluntary Work Initiative and the Volunteer Management Framework. For more information on these and other Australian Government initiatives about volunteering, please see: www.facs.gov.au

Internet Access

There are a number of programs that provide free or affordable internet access and training to those who would not otherwise have access. For more information contact your local library, council or school or call 1800 222 979.

APPENDIX – Settlement programs funded by the department

Below is a list of the settlement services provided to migrants and humanitarian entrants by the department. All settlement services funded by the department welcome the involvement of volunteers, apart from TIS National, the Government-funded translating and interpreting service. TIS National employs accredited interpreters on a contract basis, and does not recruit volunteers (more on TIS below).

Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy

Under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS), refugees and Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) entrants receive initial settlement support based on their individual needs. This aims to promote self-sufficiency and discourage dependency.

Applicants for the SHP must be supported by an Australian organisation, be a citizen or permanent resident and usually be known to the applicant. The person or organisation is called a 'proposer', and will help the SHP applicant with travel to Australia, accommodation, and initial orientation to the Australian way of life.

Contracted service providers offer the following IHSS assistance to humanitarian entrants:

- **Case Coordination, Information and Referrals Assistance** which includes:
 - a case coordination plan based on a needs assessment
 - information about and referral to other government and non-government services and
 - helping proposers to fulfil their role of assisting SHP entrants to settle. Proposers are offered information about issues they may face when assisting entrants to access essential services.

- **On-Arrival Reception and Assistance** – eligible entrants are met on arrival, taken to accommodation and provided with initial orientation assistance.
- **Accommodation Assistance** – assistance is provided to new arrivals to help them find accommodation and to provide them with a basic package of goods to start establishing their own household in Australia.
- **Short-Term Torture and Trauma Counselling Assistance** – new arrivals are offered torture and trauma counselling where appropriate, and providers raise awareness of health issues arising from torture and trauma experiences amongst other health care providers.

IHSS assistance focuses on the initial settlement period, which is generally about six months. Once entrants exit the IHSS, they are referred to organisations delivering migrant community services, such as Migrant Resource Centres and Migrant Service Agencies,

For more information on the IHSS visit:

www.immi.gov.au/settle/booklets/ihss.htm

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

The Australian Government contracts organisations in each state and territory to deliver English language tuition to eligible migrants, refugees and other humanitarian entrants through the AMEP. The AMEP English language curriculum is designed to provide students with practical tuition in everyday life in Australia. Classes cover topics such as opening a bank account and enrolling children in school.

AMEP clients may choose from a range of learning options:

- full or part-time classroom tuition in formal or community-based settings
- a distance-learning course, available throughout Australia and comprising texts, audio and video tapes, backed by regular contact with a qualified teacher
- the Home Tutor Scheme, which provides language assistance by a trained volunteer, usually on a one-to-one basis in the client's home for those unable to attend classes and
- individual self-paced learning in Individual Learning Centres.

It is also possible for some humanitarian entrants to learn English through the Special Preparatory Program (SPP). The SPP is for eligible humanitarian entrants who may have difficulty adapting to the more formal learning environment offered by the AMEP. They may be recovering from traumatic pre-migration experiences or have had limited schooling before migrating. The SPP was established to help these entrants make the transition to the AMEP and their new life in Australia.

SPP language tuition is offered in an informal environment, often in a community setting. SPP tuition is given by qualified teachers experienced in dealing with the special needs of humanitarian entrants. The SPP also provides students with information about other support and settlement services.

For further information on the AMEP visit:

www.immi.gov.au/amep

Migrant Community Services

The department provides funding to community organisations under the Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS), and to a network of Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) and Migrant Service Agencies (MSAs). These organisations deliver services which help newly-arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants settle as quickly as possible and build rewarding lives in Australia.

They provide services which include:

- the provision of information, referral and casework
- community capacity building
- helping the broader community to plan for and integrate their services to help meet the needs of migrants and humanitarian entrants and
- representing humanitarian entrants' and migrants' needs to mainstream service providers, such as Centrelink and Medicare, to help them deliver culturally appropriate services.

For further information on migrant community services, visit:

www.immi.gov.au/facts/92funding.htm#mrc

New Settlement Grants Program

In July 2006, MRC/MSA and CSSS funding will be combined to form the Settlement Grants Program.

The types of projects that the Settlement Grants Program will fund are similar to the services currently provided by MRCs, MSAs and CSSS-funded organisations, including:

- the provision of information, referral and casework services
- community capacity building and
- service planning, development and integration that encourages the delivery of culturally and linguistically appropriate services by all government and non-government service providers.

For further information on the Settlement Grants Program visit: www.immi.gov.au/grants/sgp.htm

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

TIS National helps migrants and refugees (who are Australian citizens and permanent residents) who do not speak English adequately to communicate with various service providers. These providers include doctors; community-based (not for profit) non-government organisations; local government authorities; trade unions and parliamentarians. TIS also provides a translation of settlement-related, personal documents – eg birth certificates, driver’s licences, education qualifications – of migrants and humanitarian entrants, free of charge within the first two years of their permanent residency in Australia. Fee-free translations are organised through AMEP Service Providers across Australia.

For further information on TIS visit:
www.immi.gov.au/tis/

Living in Harmony

Living in Harmony is an Australian Government initiative designed to promote community harmony, build relationships between people and address racism where it occurs in Australia. The initiative is primarily a community-based education program aiming to enhance our appreciation and understanding of Australian society through:

- a community grants program
- a partnerships program and
- a public information strategy, incorporating Harmony Day held on 21 March each year.

For further information on Living in Harmony visit:
www.harmony.gov.au

See the “Getting started” chapter for more information on how to get in contact or become involved with involved in any of the above activities.

Abbreviations

ACCES	Assisting Collaborative Community Employment Services
ACL	Australian Centre for Languages
AMES	Adult Multicultural Education Services
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
CALD	culturally and linguistically diverse
CSSS	Community Settlement Services Scheme
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
ESL	English as a Second Language
FaCS	Department of Family and Community Services
IHSS	Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy
MDA	Multicultural Development Association
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
MSA	Migrant Service Agency
RRAC	Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council
SGP	Settlement Grants Program
SHP	Special Humanitarian Program
SPP	Special Preparatory Program
SVDP	St Vincent De Paul
TIS National	Translating and Interpreting Service
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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