



Strengthening Outcomes

Refugee Students in Government Schools



Published by the ESL Unit

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Address enquiries to esl@edumail.vic.gov.au

Minister's Foreword



In 2007 more than 1600 refugee students enrolled in Victorian government schools. Refugees have always been part of the intake of recently arrived students into schools, but in the past three years the proportion of refugees has grown to more than a third of all recently arrived students. Many of the refugees, currently settling in Victoria, have experienced personal hardships before arriving, including many years in refugee camps, torture and trauma, loss of family members, little or no schooling and low literacy levels in their first language.

In recognition of the importance of assisting schools to meet the highly specialised education and personal support needs of this group of students, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has developed *Strengthening Outcomes – Refugee Students in Government Schools*. It is hoped that this document will provide useful contextual information for schools who are welcoming refugee students into their schools for the first time and be a source of useful support material for other schools and organisations providing support and services to refugees.

Strengthening Outcomes acknowledges that additional support is needed to deal effectively with the challenges refugees face in settling into school and remaining engaged with education. Most importantly, it identifies the need for the Department to work closely with community partners to achieve the best possible outcomes for refugee students.

I am enthusiastic about the improvements that are possible and this document will act as a catalyst for a range of strategies to be implemented by the Department to extend support for refugee students.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Bronwyn Pike'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'B' being particularly large and stylized.

Bronwyn Pike MP
Minister for Education

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Part 1 – Introduction



Strengthening outcomes: Refugee students in government schools

Victorian government schools can be both refreshed and challenged by their refugee students. Schools provide one of the first experiences of life in Australia for the increasing number of students from refugee backgrounds and their families.



The challenge for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and schools is to be able to recognise the realities of the 'refugee experience' of their students and respond with appropriate and targeted programs to better assist with their learning and settlement.

Refugee students have always been a component of the intake of school-age students who enrol in our schools each year. In recent years, however, refugee and humanitarian entrant students have made up a greater proportion of the overall intake of new arrivals entering Australia.

Over the past 10 years, the national origin of refugee and humanitarian entrants has changed substantially, resulting in many of the students who are now enrolled having had severely interrupted schooling or little or no experience of school. The lack of literacy in a first or a second language, little or no knowledge or understanding of how school works, and the trauma associated with the refugee experience, means that refugee students are likely to face substantial obstacles to settling, including learning in our schools. Without particular interventions at a system and a local school level, many students from refugee backgrounds are likely to experience considerable disadvantage and may fail to achieve their educational and social potential.

Australia's refugee and humanitarian program

The Australian Government has primary responsibility for migration and for providing initial settlement assistance to refugees arriving in Australia.

Each year, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship sets the planning levels for both the Migration Program and the Humanitarian Program.

Refugee and humanitarian entrants are provided with specialised support under the Australian Government's Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme (IHSS) to help them settle in Australia. The intensive assistance aims to help refugee and humanitarian entrants settle well and achieve self-sufficiency as soon as possible after arrival. Specialised assistance includes the provision of initial information and orientation, accommodation, household formation, and health assessment and early intervention. In addition, the Australian Government makes funding available to the states to provide adult and school programs for learning English.

Who is a refugee?

International law defines a 'refugee' as a person who has fled from and/or cannot return to their country due to a well-founded fear of persecution, including war or civil conflict.

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

Article 1, The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

Offshore Resettlement

The offshore resettlement component comprises two categories of permanent visa and two categories of temporary visa.

Permanent offshore humanitarian visa categories

Refugee for people who are subject to persecution in their home country, who are typically outside their home country, and are in need of resettlement.

Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) for people outside their home country who are subject to substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights in their home country.

Temporary offshore humanitarian visa categories

The offshore temporary humanitarian visas are for people who have bypassed or abandoned effective protection in another country and for whom humanitarian entry to Australia is appropriate. It comprises two sub-categories:

Secondary Movement Relocation

Secondary Movement Offshore Entry

Department of Immigration & Citizenship Fact Sheet 60, March 2007

*For further information refer to
<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/index.htm#humanitarian>*

The refugee experience

Refugee students and their families come to Australia from many different countries and backgrounds, but all share an experience of displacement and loss.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that, by the end of 2005, the number of refugees reached an estimated 8.4 million persons worldwide.

In Africa, half or more than half of the refugees are under the age of 18.

*2005 Global Refugee Trends,
UNHCR Geneva, June 2006*

The majority of people entering Australia under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program have been exposed to some form of political, religious or intercultural violence, persecution, armed conflict or civil disorder. Refugees have usually been forced to flee their homes and are likely to have been forcibly separated from families and communities. Many have spent long periods in refugee camps without adequate food, shelter or access to education and health services.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that around one in three of the world's refugees has had at least one experience of torture, with almost seven in 10 being subject to other traumatic events such as prolonged political repression or loss of family members in violent circumstances.

For more information on the refugee experience, visit Foundation House, the Victoria Foundation for the Survivors of Torture home page www.foundationhouse.org.au

Victorian Government policy – A Fairer Victoria

Some very clear directions about how best to address the real and potential disadvantage likely to be experienced by refugee students can be found in the Victorian Government's statement of its key social principles, *A Fairer Victoria – Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage* (AFV).

AFV sets out actions the Government will take to improve access to vital services, reduce barriers to opportunity, strengthen assistance for disadvantaged groups to ensure that people get the help they need at critical times in their lives.

"We have always provided special services to meet the particular needs of different groups, especially as they settle within the community."

A Fairer Victoria – Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage

AFV recognises that the newer waves of migration will place some strain on language services and education programs and states the principle that help may need to be extended to refugee entrants to enable better access to all services and aid their successful transition to life in Victoria.

"We will increase our efforts to improve access to services for our multicultural communities, especially language services, education and health services. At the same time we will continue to promote multicultural harmony."

A Fairer Victoria – Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage

AFV reiterates the principle that while universal access to services is the fundamental aim of government, special services have always been required to meet the particular needs of different groups. It notes that most refugee entrants to Victoria have experienced war and famine, sometimes children have never attended school and some have no experience of hospitals and doctors. Importantly, there is a commitment to providing resources and programs to assist those making a new life in a new country.



The population policy, *Beyond Five Million*, announced by the Victorian Government in 2004, also makes a clear and firm commitment to the ongoing acceptance and settlement of refugee and humanitarian entrants into the community. The policy recognises that refugee and humanitarian entrants have particular needs and require considerable assistance during the settlement period. To this end, the Victorian Government complements Commonwealth-funded settlement programs by providing additional funding and programs, many of which are also available to holders of Temporary Protection visas.

Humanitarian Entrants

“Australia’s Humanitarian Program reflects its commitment as a global partner in the system of international protection to share the responsibility for the protection of refugees and people facing significant difficulties. Victoria is committed to the acceptance and settlement of humanitarian entrants and refugees into our community. In 2002–03 Victoria attracted 36 per cent and 39 per cent of the total Australian intake in the Special Humanitarian Program and Refugee categories. The State’s tradition of compassion has enriched Victoria, with many refugees succeeding in building their lives.

Humanitarian entrants have particular needs and require considerable assistance during the settlement period. To complement Commonwealth-funded settlement services, the Victorian Government provides additional funding and programs for refugee and humanitarian entrants, many of which are also available to Temporary Protection Visa holders...”

Beyond Five Million The Victorian Government’s Population Policy, State of Victoria, December 2004

These policies clearly signal that the Victorian government has an ongoing and longer-term commitment to the provision of special assistance to refugee and humanitarian entrants in a range of settings.

Interrupted schooling and experience in camps

The overwhelming majority of young people from refugee backgrounds enrolling in Victorian schools will have experienced some disruption to their education prior to arriving in Australia.



Some will have experienced the harsh and often insecure conditions in refugee camps. While they are almost certain to have been exposed to disease, under-nourishment and high levels of stress, it is equally likely that they will not have had adequate and on-going access to school and schooling.

Disruption to schooling is a direct result of the refugee experience and the longer the disruption, the more likely it is that lives have been broken by war and displacement and the absence of the most basic of services and conditions. As they plan and provide educational support for this target group, it is critical for both education planners and providers to understand that low levels of education amongst young people from refugee backgrounds typically correlate with long-term exposure to traumatic experiences.

Although primary schooling is often offered in camps, many children do not attend because they may be needed to queue for the family at food distribution points, they may not be well enough or have adequate clothing or money for materials to allow them to attend. The quality of the schooling offered also varies enormously. Other refugee students will have spent time in a number of different countries before arriving in Australia and even though they may have attended some form of school in a number of places, their schooling also will have been severely disrupted and they are likely to lack literacy and other learning skills.

Children from a refugee background may not be literate in their own language so that learning English is doubly hard. Because they have not had the experience of school, they may not have developed the concepts needed to understand abstract notions or the language which describes them.

“...it must first be remembered that people become refugees in order to escape from an intolerable threat to their fundamental rights or security at home; protection is, by definition, a benefit that is not available to the refugee in his/her own country. However, in times of crisis, the granting of asylum to large numbers of prima facie refugees is often premised on their being confined to camps. Such measures, which are imperfect and not in conformity with the rights enshrined in the refugee instruments, represent compromises that balance emergency refugee needs and host State concerns.

If it is true that camps save lives in the emergency phase, it is also true that, as the years go by, they progressively waste these same lives. A refugee may be able to receive assistance, but is prevented from enjoying those rights – for example, to freedom of movement, employment, and in some cases, education – that would enable him or her to become a productive member of a society.”

Protracted Refugee Situations Executive Committee on the High Commissioner's Program UNHCR, June 2004

Because they may not have experienced the socialisation that comes with being at school, students may not know how to be organised or understand about sitting still and concentrating and might also find it difficult to cope with the usual practice in schools of spending long periods of time in the classroom. Because some children will have grown up in camps without being socialised according to the values of their own culture, they may have some difficulty in understanding, adapting to and dealing with the norms of behaviour that operate in schools in Australia.

The impact of the refugee experience on schooling

Many of the refugee students who are now entering the education system with severely disrupted schooling, or who have spent little or no time in school, present with learning needs which have created some real challenges for the system at several levels.

For many students, the trauma related to the refugee experience will also interfere with their capacity to learn and they will take a lot longer to make progress in learning English in the first instance.

Because programs need to take account of the time it takes to learn how to study and adapt to the culture and the discipline of a formal learning environment, existing programs have had to be modified and major initiatives launched to best cater for the students' needs.

For more information about the refugee experience and implications for schools, see www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/refugees/default.htm



"Research confirms that those new arrivals students who enter school with minimal prior formal schooling, little or no literacy in their own language, refugee trauma experiences, weak or disrupted family ties or physical/sensory impairments experience a 'double disadvantage' and are typically several years behind their ESL new arrival peers in attaining comparable literacy skill levels."

Brown, Miller & Mitchell, Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, Vol. 29, no. 2, 2006. pp. 150–162

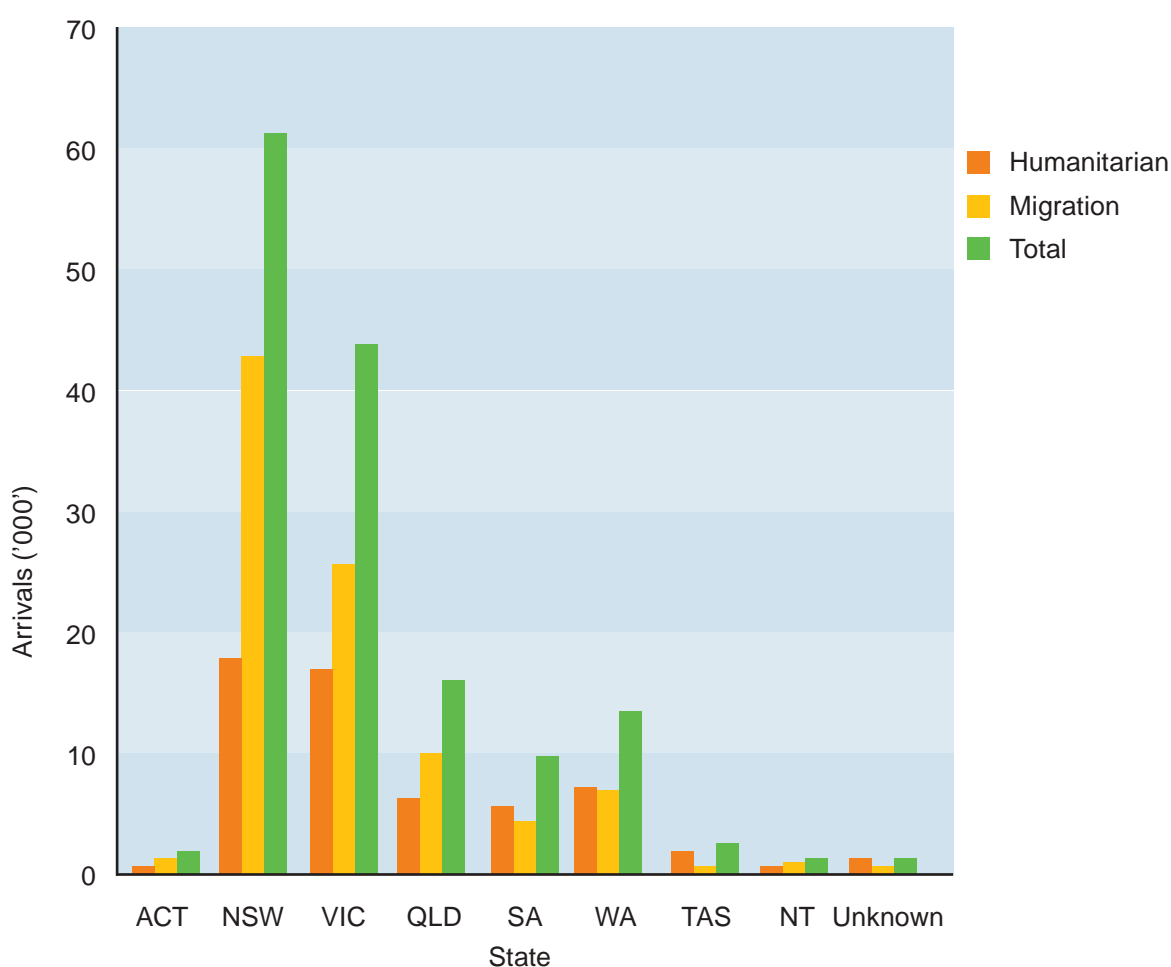
Refugee and humanitarian entrants to Victoria

The history of Australia's refugee intake reflects the history of conflict and upheaval around the world. Think of the devastation of post World War 2 Europe and the waves of violence that brought South East Asian boat people here in the 1970s. More recently, we have seen conflicts in the Balkans and the Middle East, and now the displaced millions in Africa and Asia.

Refugees have come from many parts of the world, but share the common experiences of displacement and loss and, for the most part, starting again from nothing.

Victoria is the second highest settlement location in Australia (Figure 1), settling approximately 42,854 arrivals (combined Migration and Humanitarian Program) the years 2002–03 to 2006–07. Some 17,064 arrivals or 39.8 per cent of the State's overall intake consisted of humanitarian entrants as compared to an average of around 38.4 per cent at the national level.

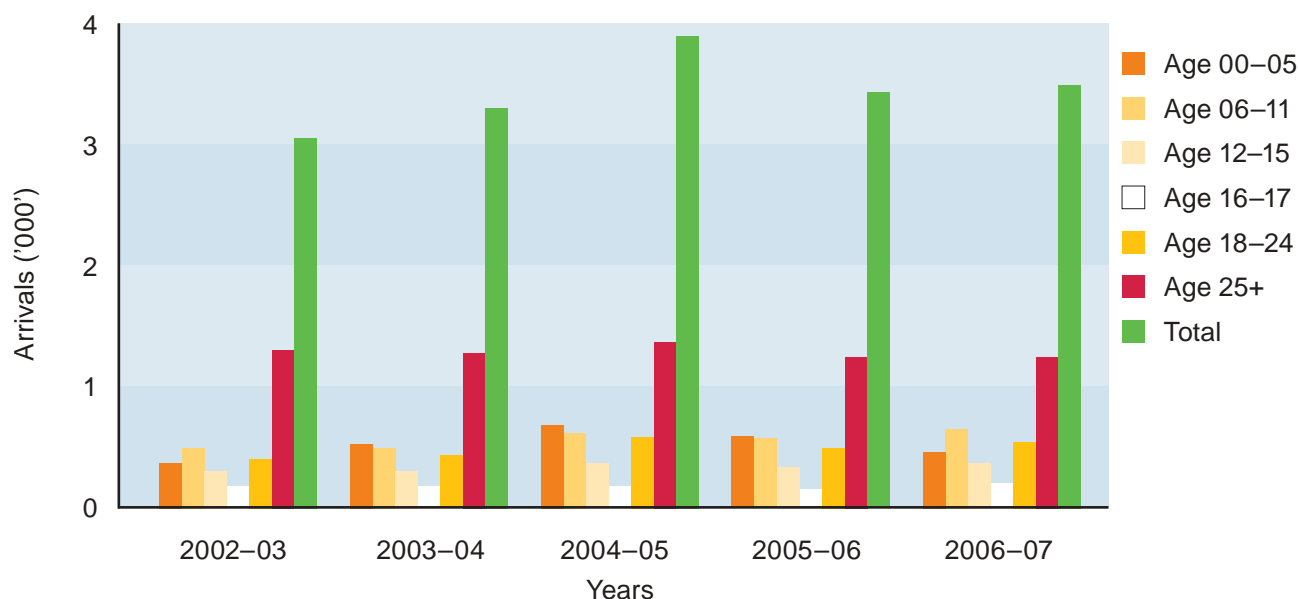
Figure 1: Arrivals by state or territory 2002–03 to 2006–07



Victoria – Settlement Needs of New Arrivals 2007. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, August 2007

Between 2002 and 2007, approximately 17,000 refugees settled in Victoria through the Refugee and Humanitarian Program. Each year over 30 per cent of the intake were of school age when they arrived (Figure 2).

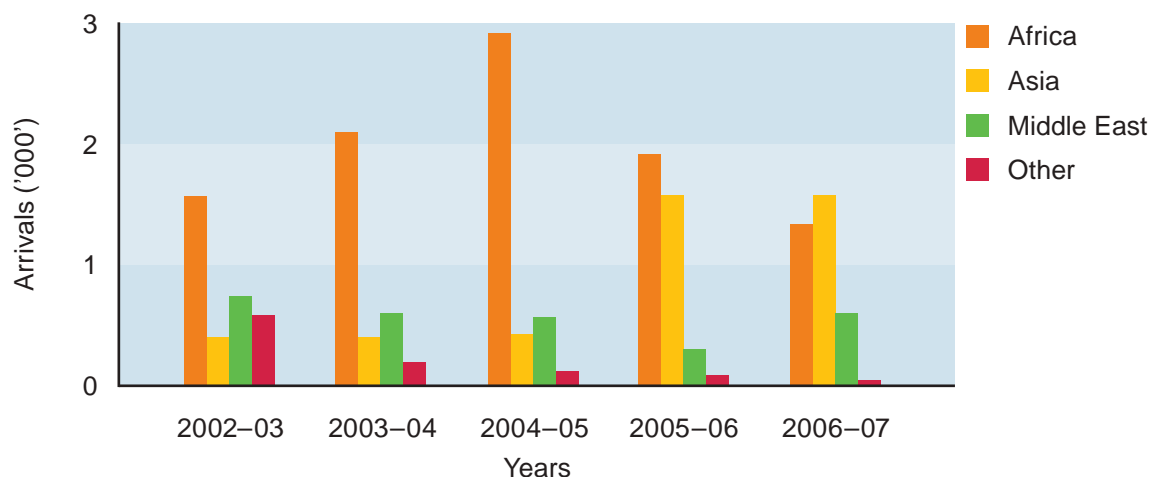
Figure 2: Age on arrival of humanitarian target group entrants, VIC 2002–03 to 2006–07



Victoria – Settlement Needs of New Arrivals 2007. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, August 2007

In the past five years, 2002–03 to 2006–07, entrants originating from Africa made up just over 57 per cent of the total humanitarian target group intake for Victoria (Figure 3). Sudan was the main country of birth in this period, comprising almost 39 per cent of all humanitarian entrants. This trend was also evident in 2006–07 where around 22 per cent of all humanitarian entrants were born in Sudan.

Figure 3: Main source regions of humanitarian target group entrants, VIC 2002–03 to 2006–07



Victoria – Settlement Needs of New Arrivals 2007. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, August 2007

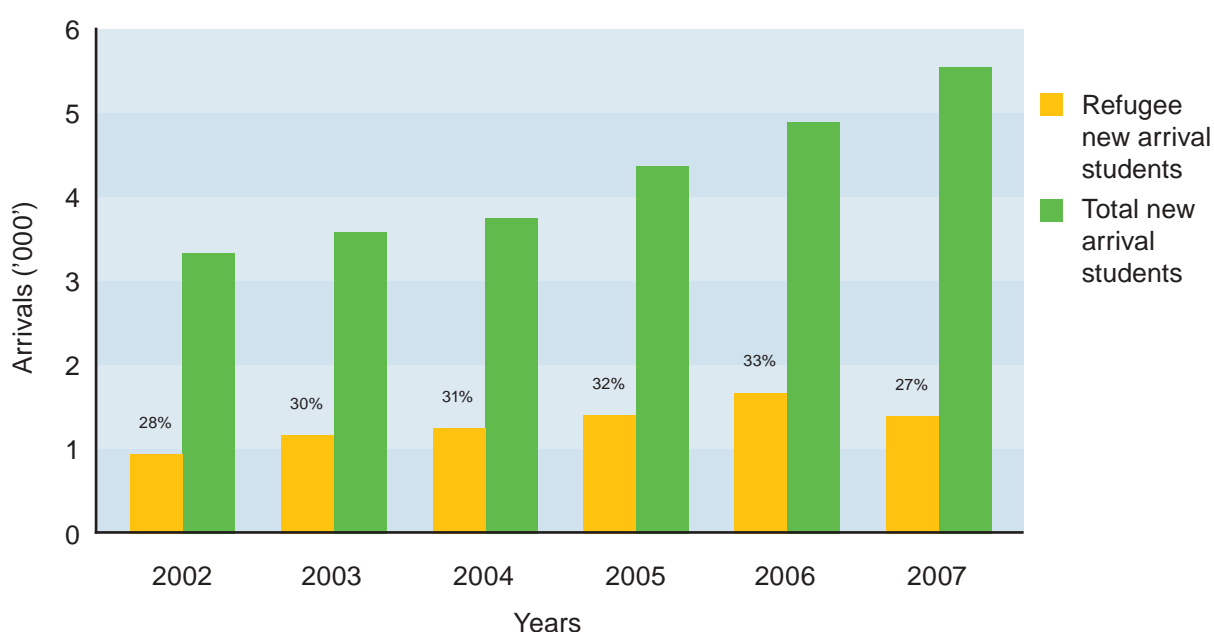
The overall increase in the number of entrants originating from Africa directly reflected the regional focus of the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program of Australian Government in the years 2002–03 to 2006–07, where people from Africa were granted just over 57 per cent of the total number of places available. From a peak in 2004–05, entrants born in Africa declined by around 55 per cent over the last two years. There has been a corresponding rise in entrants from Asia (including Afghanistan) making up around 45 per cent of entrants in 2006–07. In the same year, there was a significant increase in arrivals from Burma/Myanmar (approximately 21 per cent of humanitarian arrivals in that year).

Changes in settlement patterns – Impact on provision

Government schools are often the first to experience the impact of changes in the location of refugee and humanitarian entrants.

In recent years, there has been a marked trend for more dispersed settlement as refugees have made both an initial and a second move to outer-metropolitan and rural areas as a result of sponsorship, joining existing communities or in search of more readily available and affordable housing or employment. School enrolments of refugee students have also followed on the successful implementation of a number of carefully planned regional humanitarian settlement projects.

Figure 4: Percentage of refugee and humanitarian entrant enrolments 2002–07



Department of Education and Early Childhood Development New Arrivals (NA) Data Collection, 2002–2007

In Victoria, in each of the years 2002 to 2007, the number of newly arrived students enrolling in programs for learning English as a Second Language (ESL) has increased.

In 2006, consistent with the pattern that emerged in the previous few years, some 2,128 newly arrived students in need of English language tuition enrolled directly in mainstream schools. They required considerable in-school support through outreach coordinators and other services provided by English language schools and centres.

Data for the same year indicates that there were significant increases in the numbers of new arrival students entering primary and secondary schools on refugee and humanitarian visas with severely interrupted or no schooling.

Part 2 – Key strategies



School support

Because some schools have little or no experience in providing programs in English as a second language and a limited capacity to recognise and meet the needs of newly arrived refugee students, key strategies have been put in place to make sure that the necessary targeted support is able to be delivered.

The strategies are varied and the targets are mixed. Some are system-wide and modify existing practices to allow the educational system to be more responsive to needs. Direct support

is being delivered to refugee students in schools, with a focus on transition and bridging programs, and additional programs for literacy. Other strategies are aimed at strengthening the capacity of schools and regions to support the work of classroom teachers and advisory staff. The further development of outreach and out-posting services, the appointment of transition officers, arrangements to extend transition and bridging programs and the funding of regional ESL officers are all designed to assist refugee students achieve positive education outcomes.

The key strategies can be categorised into two groups (further detailed in the following sections):

- Existing programs
- Program responses.



Existing programs

Specific ESL programs and services have been in place for several decades, supported by funding from the Commonwealth Government and supplemented by state funding.



The Victorian Government currently spends up to \$66 million to supplement existing ESL programs and to support strategies developed to target the students who are in greatest need.

The New Arrivals Program

Participation in an intensive program at an English language school or centre is the preferred point of entry for all newly arrived students, particularly those from refugee backgrounds.

Changes in the settlement patterns of refugee and humanitarian entrant families have meant that many more newly arrived students are now enrolling directly in schools not accustomed to catering for them.

The New Arrivals Program caters for students who satisfy specific visa requirements and are then eligible for English language tuition. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development extends this service to temporary visa holders, if places are available.

The Commonwealth Government funds English as a Second Language – New Arrivals Programme, under the Special

Learning Needs (SLN) component of grants for Commonwealth Targeted Programs. This involves a once-only per capita grant made to the school education jurisdiction in each state and territory for each eligible new arrival student enrolling in primary or secondary schools. The per capita grant is intended to provide students with an intensive English language program of a minimum of 10 hours per week for six months. Funding for all capital works for the program and the various grants and allowances are provided by the State Government.

There are four broad categories of students catered for within the New Arrivals Programme:

- Permanent residents of Australia who attract Commonwealth funding
- Temporary residents of Australia who do not attract Commonwealth funding but satisfy all Commonwealth eligibility criteria except permanent residency
- Students on temporary protection visas
- Permanent and temporary residents of Australia who fall outside the Commonwealth eligibility criteria in terms of length of time in Australia but are in need of intensive ESL support.

Students who are temporary residents, or those seeking protection, do not receive funding under the New Arrivals Programme from the Commonwealth.

English language schools and centres

Ideally, newly arrived primary and secondary students with literacy learning needs will take part in a full-time intensive program at an English language school or English language centre for between two to four school terms, that is, for between six and 12 months.



Students are taught English within the context of all the learning areas common to all students in the State. The smaller classes and high number of contact hours allow teachers to provide an intensive program which is more easily tailored to the needs of individuals. The intense focus and structured nature of the program is designed to ease their entry to mainstream schools and to assist with their adaptation to a new education system and to Australian society generally.

In recognition of their particular needs, students with interrupted or no schooling generally remain in an intensive program for longer than other students and may be taught in smaller groups.

In the metropolitan area, students can enrol directly for intensive English tuition in one of four English language schools at Blackburn, Collingwood, Noble Park or at Braybrook in the western suburbs. As well, they can enrol in the primary English language centre at Springvale or in one of the secondary English language centres at Broadmeadows, Brunswick, Glen Eira or Westall. Non-metropolitan students can enrol for the programs which operate at Geelong, Ballarat and Shepparton. There are alternative programs available for students who cannot attend an English language school or centre.

Out-posting programs

The out-posting programs assign primary teachers from an English language school or centre to a mainstream primary school, or a cluster of schools, to provide an intensive English language learning program for newly arrived students.

The program is designed for students who are unable to attend a program in an English language school or centre.

For newly arrived students who have enrolled in schools in outer metropolitan

areas, support comes through a visiting out-posting program where teachers from English language schools or centres will visit a number of schools to provide targeted support to eligible newly arrived students.

“In my role as out-posted classroom teacher of newly arrived ESL students, I have gained a far greater understanding of the transition process for students who exit from the Language School or Outpost. I am now much more aware of the curriculum expectations and demands in the early years of secondary schooling and how many newly arrived students struggle to make satisfactory progress, particularly in the areas of reading and writing. As a teacher at a language out-post, I have students in my class who are in upper primary. I feel I can now better prepare these students for their transition to secondary school as a result of having spoken to numerous mainstream teachers and having surveyed the students themselves.”

*Anne Joiner, Collingwood English Language School
Follow-up of primary newly arrived students. March 2006*

Isolated ESL Student Program

Where students are enrolled singly or in small numbers in schools in country towns, there is often no knowledge of teaching English as a second language (ESL) or of the special needs of refugee students.

The Isolated ESL Student Program targets these students to provide funding and materials. Support can be directed to fund a qualified ESL teacher on staff or the employment of a qualified casual relief teacher to provide a program for the student. Alternatively, a mentor support program can operate where a qualified ESL teacher is not available. This provides funds to enable a classroom teacher to visit an English language school or centre to become familiar with teaching strategies and resource selection for students.



New Arrivals Kit

Schools in non-metropolitan and outer-metropolitan areas with isolated new arrivals can borrow the New Arrivals Kit from Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC).

The kit consists of a selection of ESL resources and materials, which is sent from LMERC to schools on request. In both 2005 and 2006 more than 60 kits were provided free to schools and included the following Department of Education and Early Childhood Development publications (which can be found at: www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/resources/pubprimesl.htm):

- *Where's English?*
- *Beginning ESL: Support material for primary new arrivals*
- *No English: Don't panic*
- *No English 2: Questions and answers*
- *Language games for ESL students.*

English as a second language – support in mainstream schools

Programs designed for students who have been enrolled in Australian schools for more than a year are known as post new arrival English as a second language programs.

Utilising funds made available through their global budgets and which are calculated according to a weighted formula, some 460 mainstream Victorian government primary and secondary schools are funded to provide ESL programs to their eligible enrolled students. To qualify for funding, students have a language background other than English, the main language spoken at home is not English, and will have been enrolled in an Australian school for less than five years.

These programs were developed with great expertise over many years but were designed primarily to cater for students with significant prior schooling.

Program responses

The sharp increase in the number of enrolments of students from refugee backgrounds in the past five years has had a considerable impact on the New Arrivals Program in English language schools and centres, and on ESL programs in primary and secondary schools.

In schools with little or no experience of enrolling and providing programs for refugee students, the impact has also been significant. The spike in direct enrolments of refugee students with severely interrupted or no schooling has meant that schools have sought additional information and guidance about approaches to the teaching of literacy and English as a second language. They have also sought advice about the resources and materials available to better manage a changing environment.



The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has responded at a number of levels to ensure that the complex learning needs of refugee students are met. At a central office level, the Targeted Programs Branch, through the ESL Unit, has found ways to make existing practices and procedures more flexible to ensure the particular needs of these students can be adequately catered for. Practice has been modified, for instance, to enable refugee students with severely interrupted schooling and consequent low literacy levels to stay in English language schools and centres for extended periods. This allows more individualised support to be provided.

Approaches have been adapted to respond more readily to students from a refugee background, who might be scattered in small numbers in mainstream schools across both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. This has meant that teachers who are out-posted to provide English language tuition in single or clusters of mainstream schools have had to acquire additional, specialised knowledge to meet the learning needs of refugee students.

New strategies have been developed which provide strong support and close monitoring of refugee students as they make the critical transition from English language schools and centres to mainstream schools. To ensure that the move from one school setting to another can be staged and planned to match the learning needs of refugee students, options have been developed to coordinate and support the transition process and to establish bridging programs in mainstream schools.

As part of its management of targeted programs, the ESL Unit has developed state-wide professional learning activities related to teaching strategies for students with severely interrupted schooling and literacy learning needs.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's nine regional offices support government schools as they work to improve and ensure quality outcomes for students. The regions – Barwon South Western, Grampians, Gippsland, Hume, Loddon-Mallee, Eastern Metropolitan, Northern Metropolitan, Southern Metropolitan and Western Metropolitan – have played a major role in progressing strategies to support refugee background students. Regional offices have also been given explicit responsibility in relation to youth transitions and are required to engage actively with their Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs).

At the local level, schools and school communities have been introduced to other partners with expertise in the settlement needs of refugee and humanitarian entrants. Particular programs have been developed in conjunction with Foundation House, the Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture (VFST), Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) or Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES).

These programs have also assisted schools to successfully build on the broader global experience of these students to enrich and deepen the understanding and learning of all students.



Additional support

Additional funding for literacy support

Since 2004, the provision of around \$1 million in additional funding has enabled English language schools and centres to reduce class sizes and provide more intensive support to students with very low literacy levels.



Funding has been used to employ extra teachers and multicultural education aides and to purchase curriculum resources suitable to the needs of these students.

Extension of stay in English language schools and centres

New arrival students generally stay in an English language school or centre for six months. For the past few years, additional state funding has meant that the stay for refugee students has been able to be extended to up to 12 months to allow them the critical extra time they need to learn English.

The Commonwealth Government has now recognised the need for extended stays and will provide an additional \$127.8 million nationally over the four years 2010–11 to assist with intensive ESL tuition for refugee and humanitarian entrants.

Appointment of transition officers

For many refugee students, learning English intensively in a language school or centre for between six and 12 months is likely to engender a sense of security and familiarity with a known environment.

A move to a mainstream school will mark a further major transition for students and is likely to recreate former high levels of anxiety and uncertainty. The sense of dislocation may be more intense for refugee students as they move to a bigger school, from a primary school to a secondary school or move into post-compulsory education or employment.

Eleven teachers have been appointed as Transition Officers to provide critical support to students as they make the transition from an English language school or centre to a mainstream school. The work undertaken by these officers can range from introducing students and their families to the whole idea of schools and the schools system to advising the mainstream school about bridging and other teaching programs specific to students with disrupted schooling. Transition Officers will also negotiate with parents to choose a school that has an existing English language learning program or one that is close by and can adapt to meet the needs of students. They will work with ESL teachers and classroom teachers to improve transition processes and school-based programs and make sure that there is an awareness of the support services available in the wider community, which are designed to assist the settlement of refugee and humanitarian entrants.

Bridging and transition programs

Bridging programs in primary and secondary schools recognise that, because of their disrupted schooling, the majority of refugee students making the transition from an English language school or centre will still need intensive literacy teaching and targeted support to develop concepts and skills appropriate to their level of entry at the mainstream school.

With literacy levels well below fellow students who have had continuous schooling, refugee students will continue to require high levels of assistance to be able to manage the transition into mainstream programs.

Schools were invited to apply for specific funding to establish bridging and transition programs for newly arrived students who were not ready to enter mainstream classes and still in need of support. In addition to developing the literacy skills of students, bridging programs also aim to support students to acquire concept development and study skills and help them decide on educational and vocational pathways. Bridging programs are established for students who are at the early stages of literacy development and are run as parallel – but integral – to all other programs within the school. Schools are encouraged to keep the structure of the program flexible so that individual student's strengths and needs can be acknowledged and catered for.

“Students have shown steady improvement in two areas. They have integrated into Australian schooling and have been supported to involve themselves in a wide range of school activities and other opportunities. Not only have students enjoyed and learned from a wide range of excursions and real life learning situations, these opportunities have assisted their literacy and oral language development. Student achievement data shows that most students have improved in work practices. Students who have been in the school for some years have also made progress in grades and skills. A notable student, H, who could not read at all on arrival to the college three years ago is now averaging D+/C across all subjects and can read well.

One of the greatest benefits for the students has been their very positive connection with the team of teachers responsible for their care.”

Brunswick Secondary College Evaluation of Bridging/ Additional Support Program 2005

Schools can work with transition officers and regional staff to assess and identify the students who need to be included in a bridging program. Individual schools will take into account overall resource allocations and other English language and literacy programs available in the school to decide on the model that is best for them. In some schools, a full-time program will provide at least twenty hours of instruction in a class of at least 15 students. Where the school decides on a part-time program, intensive small group instruction will be combined with mainstream classes and supplementary ESL classes.

Catering for pathways for older learners

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

Many newly arrived refugee young people, aged 15 years and older, have had severely disrupted schooling. Faced with the prospect of having only one or two years to learn written and spoken English and acquire basic learning skills, many refugee students are not able to meet the expectations common for their age groups in post-compulsory education. Because they have not had enough time to develop the levels of English language needed to attempt the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or equivalent certificate, refugee students find it increasingly difficult to complete a standard educational pathway. Without specific and targeted interventions, they remain in danger of dropping out of education at the post-compulsory level.

The case for establishing a targeted intervention was made when it was observed that, even though students had completed the standard number of hours of English tuition and often had high educational expectations for themselves, they were still unable to operate at the level required for the VCE existing Victorian Education and Training (VET) courses and those available through the VCAL.

In 2003, a pilot transitional VCAL program was set up at the Western English Language School in partnership with Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES).

The program focused on the elements that would be needed to make a successful transition to standard programs. As a result, there was a strong emphasis on the further development of skills in English language, literacy and numeracy.

The program was judged a success to the extent that AMES and other providers such as the Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE consortium started to develop partnerships with schools in other metropolitan areas.

Refugee and humanitarian entrants 16 years and older 2005–07

In 2005, around 2,060 refugee and humanitarian entrant students, aged 16 years and older, were enrolled in government secondary schools. This increased to 2,482 students in 2006, an increase of 18.2 per cent. In 2007, enrolments for this cohort declined slightly to 2,332.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Language background other than English - August Census



Mayiik

Mayiik arrived in Australia in September 2004, age 17, with only four years of formal education. He was born in Sudan and spent several years in Kakuma Refugee Camp Kenya. He was assessed with advanced spoken and listening skills but with beginner level reading and writing. During a counselling session at AMES Footscray, he was advised to enrol in the Transition to Secondary School Program run in partnership with AMES and Debney Park Secondary School. He completed his VCAL Foundation over two years. Currently he is working full time at Baida Poultry. His long-term goal is to return to Further Education once he is more established financially.

Almaz

Almaz arrived in Australia in March 2004, aged 20 years old, and enrolled in the AMEP at Footscray AMES. She was born in Ethiopia and had six years of formal schooling. After completing two years at Debney Park Secondary College in the Transition to Secondary School Program, Almaz has this year enrolled at NMIT in an advanced English class. Her long-term goal is to study Nursing. She works part-time at Lentil as Anything restaurant.

Transitional VCAL programs were established at Debney Park Secondary College, Forest Hill College, Broadmeadows Secondary College and Cleeland Secondary College. Each setting has catered for students with similar backgrounds but each program was developed and tailored to take account of the level of English and the real level of disruption in the previous education of each group of students. Each program sought to expand and improve the education and training options available to refugee students.

Evaluation of these programs showed that two elements were critical for success. The first was the importance of communicating to parents and refugee communities that transitional VCAL programs were able to provide legitimate pathways to further education and training, and offered real opportunities to meet a range of career aspirations and achieve educational success.



Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is a 'hands on' option for students in Years 11 and 12. Like the VCE the VCAL is a recognised senior qualification. Unlike the VCE which is widely used by students as a pathway to university, the VCAL focuses on 'hands-on learning'. Students who do the VCAL are more likely to be interested in going on to training at TAFE, doing an apprenticeship, or getting a job after completing Year 12.

The VCAL's flexibility enables students to design a study program which suits their interests and learning needs. Students select accredited VCE and Vocational Education and Training (VET) modules and units from the following four compulsory strands:

- Literacy and Numeracy Skills
- Work Related Skills
- Industry Specific Skills
- Personal Development Skills

Students who start their VCAL and then decide they would like to complete their VCE, are able to transfer between certificates. Any VCE studies successfully completed as part of the VCAL program will count towards the VCE.

A certificate and statement of results will be issued to students who successfully complete their VCAL.

For more information, see www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vcal/students/compulsorystrands.html

*Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority,
State Government of Victoria, 2007*

"I have found the VCAL curriculum flexible enough to start where the young person is at in their language and numeracy development. The Foundation level VCAL allows for a lot of scaffolding which is so essential to newly arrived students who come from educational situations where independent learning strategies are not developed and encouraged.

It is a perfect starting place for 17–21 year olds with 0–6 years' education who wish to study in a school setting."

Margot Hennessy, AMES Youth Coordinator

Debney Park Secondary College

Debney Park is a Year 7 to 12 secondary college in the inner suburbs of Melbourne. The students come from a diverse range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and many speak English as their second language.

In addition to the usual secondary school curriculum, the school runs a middle school bridging program and Year 11 and 12 Foundation VCAL classes for newly arrived migrants, most of whom are Sudanese young people who have had little or no schooling. The school's Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) program therefore has to support a broad range of transitions, from university and TAFE entrance, to post-school literacy programs and employment.

To add to the challenge, during 2005–06 there was a complete staff turnover from the MIPs VCAL program, resulting in a complete change of pathways team members. Nonetheless, the school continues to refine a MIPs program that takes a caring case management approach to student progress and welfare.

Pathways plans to inform curriculum needs

The school's curriculum offerings are tailored to meet the learning needs of its student profile. The school achieves very high tertiary entrance rates through its VCE program. The pathways team also strongly promotes VCAL, apprenticeships and School-Based Apprenticeships as valid alternatives to the traditional VCE. However, 'the kids who most need VCAL are often the most resistant. Sometimes it is about meeting parent expectations, but many kids see VCAL as a step down from VCE,' says VCAL and senior school curriculum coordinator Gail Crennan.

"Everyone wants to go to university, whether or not that is a realistic or appropriate choice."

The school also provides a modified curriculum to meet the needs of senior Sudanese new-arrival VCAL students, who have had little or no previous schooling and who have come through the school's bridging program. For these students, the school's focus is teaching the students basic literacy, and giving them the skills to negotiate living in their new country.

"It is just a joy to teach them; you are with them as they are learning to read and it is great to watch them develop skills and familiarise themselves with Australia," says Gail.

Managed Individual Pathways – Case Studies
www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/mips/mipscasestudydpssc.htm

The second critical element was the need to invest the right amount of time to coordinate the program to ensure that it was actually addressing the complex needs of refugee students.

VCAL programs currently operate at Debney Park Secondary College and at the Cleeland campus of Dandenong High School, and are being established at Shepparton and Ballarat Secondary Colleges. The programs result from the initiative contained in the Victorian Government policy, *A Fairer Victoria – Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage*, which makes \$1.2 million available over the four years 2007–10 for specialist English as a Second Language services built around a vocational curriculum for the many newly arrived young people, including those 16 years and older, who arrive in Victoria with little or no formal education.

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs)

Transitional VCAL programs are developed in conjunction with Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs). These Networks bring together education providers, industry, community organisations, individuals and government organisations to improve education, training and employment outcomes for young people. In Victoria, there are 31 LLEN support programs which have a particular focus on young people aged between 15 and 19 who are at risk of not completing year 12 or its equivalent.



Youth Transition Support Initiative

To extend and target support further, the Youth Transition Support Initiative began to operate in January 2007. The initiative funds 24 youth transition workers across 12 LLENs. Transition Support Workers provide personalised assistance to young people aged 15 to 19 who are not in education and training, not working full-time and do not have Year 12 or an equivalent qualification. The objective of the assistance is for disengaged young people to achieve a sustainable education, training or employment outcome.

In Dandenong, part of the South East LLEN, this resource is being used to support Sudanese young people disengaged from education, training and employment.

South East LLEN is also developing a mentoring program for Sudanese young people in conjunction with local agencies.

Support for teachers and schools

Multicultural education aides

Multicultural education aides (MEAs) make a vital difference in bridging the gaps in knowledge and understanding between students and teachers, and between the school and families. By working on a one-to-one basis in the classroom, aides can help students understand and interpret the world of school and so develop their learning and social skills. Aides will also help to make and maintain contact with the parents of students from language backgrounds other than English. For many refugee families, the aide will provide some of the first essential linkages with their child's school and will help to explain how things work.



Outreach services coordinators

An outreach services coordinator has been placed in each of the four metropolitan English language schools to provide services to schools within their regions.

In cooperation with schools, the outreach services coordinators are available to assist teachers to assess the English language learning needs of newly arrived students, and recommend the most suitable support program available.

Funding for regional ESL program officers

To further assist schools to meet the high level needs of refugee students enrolling in mainstream schools, funds were allocated to metropolitan regions for the employment of ESL program officers.

In non-metropolitan regional areas, grants were allocated to fund targeted initiatives in schools focusing on newly arrived students. A key expectation for the program officers is to work with and support the schools that received transition funding for students with disrupted schooling.

A new wave of newly arrived refugees settling in Mildura and Swan Hill prompted extra support to the Loddon-Mallee region to employ a program officer to work with the schools enrolling these students. Additional support was also made available to Wonthaggi to cater for a similar surge in enrolments of students with ESL and literacy learning needs.

In addition, all regions have received funding for professional learning and for the establishment or maintenance of ESL networks. These measures are designed to build on the capacities of teachers and multicultural education aides to meet the needs of ESL learners and communicate educational information to local communities.

The Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC)

This resource centre is central to the provision of language and multicultural education in Victoria as it offers a wide range of specialist materials for programs in English as a second language (ESL), multicultural education and languages other than English (LOTE).

Victorian teachers can borrow from a wide range of resources at the Resource Centre. The LMERC online catalogue allows for searches of the e-library and checking of loans.

The LMERC lending library has a collection of over 20,000 resources which includes:

- Teacher reference materials for LOTE, ESL and multicultural education
- Culturally inclusive picture books, fiction and big books and posters
- Selected journals related to language teaching and multicultural education
- Pamphlets, clippings and articles
- Videos, CD-ROMS, DVDs and audio cassettes (English and multilingual)
- Resource materials on human rights education, civics and citizenship, prejudice, racism and social justice
- Studies in Asia resources
- Units of work and teacher notes
- LOTE, ESL and multicultural education policy documents.

The web-site can be found at www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/lmerc/lib_online_cat.htm



Improving the wellbeing of refugee students

Primary – Welfare Officer Initiative

In 2004, the Department introduced the first of three phases of the Primary Welfare Officer Initiative. Through this initiative, funding for primary welfare officers is being provided to 573 Victorian schools in 2008. The Initiative has enhanced the capacity of schools and primary welfare officers to support students who are at risk of disengagement from school and who are not reaching their educational potential.

For more information, see www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/support/pwo.htm.

Secondary – Student Welfare Coordinators

Funds have been made available to all Government secondary colleges to employ student welfare coordinators.

The role of the Student Welfare Coordinator (SWC) is vital in responding to the needs of Victoria's young people. They are responsible for helping students handle issues such as truancy, bullying, drug use and depression.

Student welfare coordinators work with other welfare professionals and agencies to address student needs.

For more information, see www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/support/swc.htm.



Professional development strategies

In 2006, several professional development opportunities were offered to support regional staff to increase their knowledge and understanding in supporting teachers of ESL learners.

Regional staff attended a full-day workshop on professional learning models being developed around strategies for supporting new arrivals with disrupted schooling, ESL and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, and developing effective ESL programs in primary schools.

In 2007, the focus remains on improving the transition of new arrival students from English language schools and centres to mainstream schools and improving the capacity of mainstream schools to respond to the needs of ESL students. To ensure this, 17 experienced ESL educators were trained as tutors to present in their regions the development course entitled Teaching ESL Students in Mainstream Classrooms.

At the same time, professional learning materials have been developed for specific audiences. They include:

- *Designing effective ESL programs – Disrupted schooling*
- *Designing effective ESL programs – Primary.*

Interpreting and translating

When students and families from language backgrounds other than English have to deal with the complications of a school environment, they need immediate and expert interpreting and translating services.

Schools will often need to introduce parents to very different approaches to teaching and learning and will want to report on student progress. Parents will often have questions about programs and how their child is going at school.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides schools with free access to qualified and accredited interpreters to better assist parents and students make sense of the school environment and understand the range of education options to be explored.

Part 3 – Partnerships



Building effective partnerships

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, through the ESL Unit, has developed some very effective partnerships with a range of agencies which have a specific brief for working with or providing direct assistance to refugee and humanitarian entrants.



The significant changes in the nature of the refugee intake have heightened the need for coordinated efforts and the targeted application of expertise.

Working in partnership has enabled the Department to respond to needs and provide programs for refugee students in a more targeted and coordinated way. The Department continues to work with a range of agencies, participates in planning and policy committees, and promotes links with agencies which might provide a direct service, such as health checks or tailored professional development, to increase awareness in English language schools and centres or mainstream schools.

The Department encourages or directly supports the development of research that focuses on elaborating and addressing the needs of refugee students in schools and in the wider community.

One particular development in this regard has been the Refugee Education Partnership Project. Starting in 2004, this project aims to establish a more coordinated system across community, education and government sectors to improve the wellbeing and educational achievements of refugee students.

The three focus areas of the project are:

- learning support programs (sometimes referred to as out of school hours or homework programs)
- refugee support in schools
- cross-sectoral coordination and policy intervention.

The partners are:

- Foundation House, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture
- The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD)
- The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (Vic Health)
- Debney Park Secondary College
- A private philanthropic trust.

Foundation House, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST)

Foundation House – the VFST has a long history of working with schools to support students with a refugee background. The work includes individual counselling, group work with students and parents/guardians, assisting school communities to promote a supportive school environment for refugee background students and their families, and professional development for school administrators, teachers and school support staff.

Foundation House has developed a range of school resources drawing on its experience in working in partnership with schools. *School's in for Refugees – Whole School Guide to Refugee Readiness*, is a guide that covers the refugee experience and the implications for practice alongside immediately useable strategies to assist students with a refugee background to recover from trauma, overcome the adverse effects of disrupted schooling and initiate the process of readjustment to a new environment. The guide contains an audit tool and is carefully targeted for maximum use by teachers, administrators and non-teaching personnel in schools to improve policies, practices, curriculum, school organisation and partnerships with parents and services to better support refugee background students.

The series of resources for use in schools produced by the VFST includes:

- *Taking Action – Human Rights and Refugee Issues Teaching Resource* (2004)
- *School's In for Refugees – A Whole School Guide to Refugee Readiness* (Reprinted 2007)
- *Healthwise – Health Literacy Teaching Resource for Refugee and Other ESL Students* (2004)
- *The Rainbow Program for Children in Refugee Families* (2002)
- *A Guide to Working with Young People who are Refugees* (2002)
- *Klassroom Kaleidoscope – A program to facilitate connectedness and wellbeing in the culturally diverse classroom* (2007)
- *Education and Refugee Students from Southern Sudan* (2004).

For more information about Foundation House programs and other resources, see www.foundationhouse.org.au



Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

The Victorian Settlement Planning Committee (VSPC)

The VSPC is a partnership of Commonwealth, state and local government agencies and community organisations that plans for the effective delivery of settlement services in Victoria.

The Refugee Young People and Transitions working group has produced the following papers to provide information and promote discussion about issues affecting refugee students.

Good Practice Principles: Guide for Working with Refugee Young People (VSPC 2005)

The document is a tool to assist services with limited experience in working with refugee young people, and to support consistent and responsive services across Victoria. It was developed as a result of discussions amongst workers from public and community sector agencies who identified gaps in the provision of service delivery to refugee young people, particularly a lack of specific policies or guidelines to direct practice.



This document recognises the uniqueness of the experience of refugee young people and how this might impact on them accessing services.

Learning Pathways for Refugee Young People – An Issues Paper for Services Working with Refugee Young People, January 2005

This issues paper identifies the key learning barriers facing newly arrived refugee young people, particularly those moving through compulsory education to training and employment.

Resource Gateway: for Teachers Working with Refugee Young People

This is a website resource which contains links to the latest information on the range of settlement and education issues facing refugee young people in Victoria. It is available as a PDF online www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/_pdf/resource-gateway.pdf.

Building Pathways: Resources to Support Transitions for Young People from Refugee Backgrounds (2007)

This downloadable resource includes a good practice framework and training materials aimed at improving the sensitivity and responsiveness of support provided to young people from refugee backgrounds as they move through education, training and employment. www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/transitions.htm

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has used its partnership with the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee to seek ways of obtaining advance and predictive information about where newly arrived families are proposing to settle – particularly for rural and regional areas. Early indications of settlement locations assist in the planning and provision of programs for students in need of English language tuition. The successful outcome of discussions has been:

Regional Settlement Digest – This digest includes information about the progress of the settlement of migrant and refugee entrants in regional Victoria, expected arrivals and the latest statistics from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Settlement Database. The digest provides a major new planning tool for agencies seeking to provide services in non-metropolitan areas.

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI)

The CMYI is a community-based organisation that advocates for the needs of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

The partnership developed between the Department and the centre has direct benefits for school communities. In 2006, the centre produced *Opening the School Gate*, a resource kit to provide teachers and other school staff with strategies to encourage parents and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate more in the educational experience of their children at school. Through the Refugee Education Partnership Project, the centre had a major role in the preparation of the report, *The Education Needs of Young Refugees in Victoria*. For more information see www.cmyi.net.au

Department of Human Services (DHS)

The DHS works with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and other agencies to provide support to refugee students and families settling in Victoria. Two programs are of special interest for schools.

The School Nursing Program

The School Nursing Program is now part of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and provides an opportunity for all newly arrived children in an English language school and centre to have vision, hearing and oral health checks. School nurses from primary and secondary school programs also provide health advice and targeted health promotion activities in some school settings in response to identified need, working in partnership with the school welfare and support teams

School Focused Youth Services (SFYS)

The SFYS is a joint initiative between the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Department of Human Services. The focus of the initiative is the coordination of preventative and early intervention strategies for young people, to be delivered through school and community clusters.

Each cluster is allocated funding to broker projects to address the needs of vulnerable young people. A welcome kit developed for refugee youth and their families to introduce them to expectations around schooling has been developed and includes a professional development component for teachers. Meetings with targeted community groups have also been organised to develop understandings about curriculum and discipline approaches of local schools



Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)

The VMC worked in partnership with the Department to develop the Welcome to Victoria Kit as a practical way to encourage newly arrived students and their families to engage more closely with the Victorian community.

The kit contains a CD-ROM with basic language and numeracy activities produced by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development together with information about life in Victoria, a welcome letter from the Premier, tickets and vouchers and information from key organisations. It will be updated and distributed to newly arrived students in English language schools and centres.

Part 4 – Future directions



Moving forward

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will build upon the key strategies developed to date to provide maximum support to refugee students, in particular those with severely interrupted, little or no schooling.

Enhance transition arrangements

Recognising that refugee students need high levels of assistance when making the transition from an English language school or centre to a mainstream school, the Department will continue to allocate additional funding to primary and secondary schools to build on and improve transition and bridging program arrangements.

Regional program officers will provide support to schools to plan for and implement effective ESL programs.

Support the development of pathways

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, through the ESL Unit, will encourage schools to develop programs and pathways that cater specifically for the complex learning needs of refugee students with little or no formal schooling and who are under considerable pressure to urgently improve their English language and literacy skills.

The Department will encourage schools to build on work already undertaken and develop stronger linkages with local education and training providers, via the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENS), so that students can gain a better understanding of their possible educational, training and work options. Schools will be encouraged to develop the pathways, networks and relationships appropriate for their refugee students. These might incorporate vocational education and training programs, such as the Victorian Certificate of Applied Education (VCAL) or TAFE courses or pathways which could lead back to the completion of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and entry to university.

Out of school hours learning support

In response to local need, a range of volunteer run out of school hours learning support programs (OSHLSP) have developed in Victoria. There are currently over 80 programs in schools and local community centres in metropolitan areas.



These programs provide a range of valuable additional support for disadvantaged students and include homework programs, tutoring, social support and sporting activities. Departmental staff from central and regional offices will continue to work with relevant agencies and the Commonwealth to find ways of supporting the programs and strengthening refugee student access to them.

One current initiative is support for a pilot program in the Western Metropolitan Region to trial increased coordination of education tutoring programs across schools, increased linkages with mainstream school programs and improved volunteer support and training.

Review ESL funding

The Department wants to make sure that the ESL programs provided currently in English language schools and centres and mainstream schools are effectively planned, targeted at the students most in need and are able to improve their educational outcomes.

The Department has recently completed a review to determine the effectiveness of current delivery arrangements for programs and the extent to which they target the neediest students and reveal the factors that determine academic success for ESL students.

Strengthen school capacity

All schools need to be equipped to understand and meet the needs of students from refugee backgrounds.

For the immediate future, priority will be given to the improvement of transition arrangements for students making the move from an English language school or centre to a mainstream school. An equal emphasis will be placed on improving the capacity of mainstream schools to respond to the needs of ESL students.





Schools will also enhance their capacities by training in and use of the professional learning materials that have been specifically developed for students with disrupted schooling.

The Department will strengthen the link between welfare support in schools and knowledge of refugee issues by continuing to work in partnership with the VFST to build the capacity of schools to support their students of refugee background and by promoting their resources.

A refugee support area will also be developed and promoted on the ESL website.

Improve data collection and monitoring

Through its membership of the Victorian Settlement Planning Committee of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, the Department will continue to explore ways in which predictive settlement data can be made available to service providers. This will help to match the delivery of ESL programs to where newly arrived families are settling.

The Department will collect ESL student achievement data that will be used to assist in improved targeting of funding to meet the needs of ESL students including those with interrupted schooling.

The Department will continue to develop comprehensive ESL student data sets for internal and public use and provide crucial advice on settlement patterns, school transition and retention figures.

Further develop partnerships

The Department will continue to work in partnership with Government and non-government agencies and the community to respond to issues involving refugee students.

Working in partnership has enabled all agencies to develop a better understanding of the variety of activities that are being undertaken to support refugee young people and deliver better outcomes for them.

Resources

Links

ESL support

The ESL Unit of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has developed the following web pages to provide assistance and practical information about the support available for ESL and refugee students, including those with disrupted or no previous schooling.

ESL home page

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/default.htm> – this link details the support available for schools and teachers, including curriculum and publications, and programs available for ESL students. The following will be of particular interest for teachers of students with a refugee or disrupted schooling background:

Not a Matter of Choice: Information about refugees for schools and teachers (video)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/resources/pubdisrupted.htm>

Moving in new directions: Literacy strategies for ESL learners with disrupted schooling (video)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/resources/pubdisrupted.htm#2>

New Arrivals

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/newstudents.htm> – details the New Arrivals Program that provides access to intensive English as a second language (ESL) tuition for between six to 12 months to newly-arrived students from language backgrounds other than English.

Interpreting and Translating

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schooloperations/interpret/default.htm> – details the language services available to assist schools communicate with parents from language backgrounds other than English.

Curriculum and support materials

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/resources/default.htm> – links to information about a range of curriculum and support materials available for teachers of students who are learning English. The following will be of particular interest for teachers of students with a refugee or disrupted schooling background:

ESL Companion to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards –

<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/support/esl/esl.html>

ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework II (VCAA) Teacher Support Material –

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/curriculumatwork/Index.htm>

Talking in Tune: A guide to working with interpreters in schools (video)

Beginning ESL – Primary: Support material for primary new arrivals

Beginning ESL – Secondary: Support material for teachers of secondary new arrivals

ESL learners in the middle years: Strategies for the mainstream classroom (video)

ESL Students in the Early Years: A multimedia resource for teachers of ESL students in the early years (P–2) (CD-ROM)

First Language Assessment Tasks (Arabic, Chinese, Khmer, Turkish, Somali and Vietnamese)

Language games for ESL students – classroom activities for students learning English as a second language

No English: Don't panic

No English 2: Questions and answers

Where's English?: An interactive multimedia resource for students at the beginning stages of learning English as a second language

Word Study for New arrivals: Practical word-study materials for teachers of primary and secondary ESL students, beginning their English language learning

Other useful resources include:

Refugee Education Partnership Project, Refugee support in schools: resources, information and advice

www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/refugees/default.htm – provides details of the range of resources and information available to teachers and school communities to support students from refugee backgrounds in schools, especially those with disrupted or no previous schooling.

Building Pathways: Training in Supporting Transitions for Young People from Refugee Backgrounds

www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/transitions.htm

Resource Gateway for teachers working with refugee young people in Victoria

www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/settle/_pdf/resource-gateway.pdf

Refugee Education Partnership Project, The Education Needs of Young Refugees in Victoria (2007)

www.foundationhouse.org.au.

Refugee Education Partnership Project, I wish it was everyday... Out of School Hours Learning Support Programs Tutor Training Resource

www.cmyi.net.au

Refugee Education Partnership Project, I wish it was every day... Case Studies From Out of School Hours Learning Support Programs

www.cmyi.net.au

Refugee Education Partnership Project, I wish it was every day... Out of School Hours Learning Support Programs A guide for coordinators

www.cmyi.net.au

Additional contacts and links

For ESL policy, programs and resources

www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/contacts.htm

For post compulsory initiatives

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/structure/postcomp/initiatives.htm

Agencies

Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) for English language teaching for migrant and refugees

www.ames.net.au

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) for multicultural youth information and programs:

www.cmyi.net.au

Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) for settlement information for service providers: www.immi.gov.au/settle/providers/index.htm

Languages and Multicultural Education Centre (LMERC) for the Ethnic School Resource Centre and resources: www.sofweb.vic.edu/lem/lmerc/index.htm

Foundation House, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST) for social and emotional counselling for refugees and to assist schools to develop a whole school approach to support students from refugee backgrounds and their families: www.foundationhouse.org.au

Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) is an independent statutory authority which provides advice to the Victorian Government about the development of legislative and policy frameworks and the delivery of services in a culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse society:

www.multicultural.vic.gov.au

Migrant Resource Centres

www.vtpu.org.au/links/#migrant

The Refugee Council of Australia

www.refugeecouncil.org.au/

