



*Final Report*

# **The housing and homelessness journeys of refugees in Australia**

authored by

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for the

**Australian Housing and Urban  
Research Institute**

at The University of Western Australia

December 2015

AHURI Final Report No. 256

ISSN: 1834-7223

ISBN: 978-1-925334-13-5

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<b>Title</b>	The housing and homelessness journeys of refugees in Australia	
<b>ISBN</b>	978-1-925334-13-5	
<b>Format</b>	PDF	
<b>Key words</b>	Refugees, housing, homelessness, housing careers, housing pathways	
<b>Editor</b>	Anne Badenhorst	AHURI Limited
<b>Publisher</b>	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited Melbourne, Australia	
<b>Series</b>	AHURI Final Report; no. 256	
<b>ISSN</b>	1834-7223	
<b>Preferred citation</b>	<p>Flatau, P., Smith, J., Carson, G., Miller, J., Burvill, A. and Brand, R. (2015) <i>The housing and homelessness journeys of refugees in Australia</i>, AHURI Final Report No.256. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited.</p> <p>Available from:  <a href="http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/projects/p82015">http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/projects/p82015</a>.  [Add the date that you accessed this report: DD MM YYYY].</p>	

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This material was produced with funding from the Australian Government and the Australian state and territory governments. AHURI Limited gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support it has received from these governments, without which this work would not have been possible.

AHURI comprises a network of university Research Centres across Australia. Research Centre contributions, both financial and in-kind, have made the completion of this report possible.

The opinions in this publication reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of any person or organisation that has provided assistance or otherwise participated in this study in any way.

We would like to extend special thanks to the various services that assisted us in collecting data for the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* and the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey*. We would particularly wish to thank Alicia Bauskis for her work in developing the key survey instruments for this report and managing the data collection process and to Farida Fozdar, Val Colic-Peisker and Paul Maginn for their important contributions to designing the project and the research instruments.

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## ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
AHSS	Australian Humanitarian Settler Survey
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AMEP	The Adult Migrant English Program
ASAS	Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme
ASeTTS	Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors
ASRG	Australian Survey Research Group
ASRC	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
AUSCO	Australian Cultural Orientation
BAs	Bilingual Assistants
BVE	Bridging Visa E
BVOR	Blended Visa Office-referred Refugees (Canada)
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CAS	Community Assistance Support
CAT	Covenant against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CCS	Complex Case Support
CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing Commission
COA	Commonwealth of Australia
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DHS	Department of Human Services (Victoria)
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (2001–2006)
DL	Discretionary Leave visa (UK)
DSS	Department of Social Services
GAR	Government-Assisted Refugees (Canada)
GPP	Gateway Protection Program (UK)
HCCCaLD	Housing Crisis Committee for Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Communities
HILDA	Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey
HP	Humanitarian Protection visa (UK)

HSS	Humanitarian Settlement Services
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IMA	Irregular Maritime Arrival
IMDB	Canadian Longitudinal Immigration Database
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
LAS	Living in Australia Survey
LCR	Landed-in-Canada Refugees
LLNP	Language, Literacy Numeracy Program
LSIA	Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia
MRS	Mandate Refugee Scheme (UK)
NASS	National Asylum Seeker Support (UK)
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NHSC	National Housing Supply Council
NSPN	National Settlement Policy Network
NSW	New South Wales
PSR	Privately-Sponsored Refugees (Canada)
PTSD	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
RAP	Resettlement Assistance Program (Canada)
RCoA	Refugee Council of Australia
SGP	Settlement Grants Program
SEE	Skills for Education and Employment
SHEV	Safe Haven Enterprise Visa
SHP	Special Humanitarian Program
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TPV	Temporary Protection Visa
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Key points

- The hardships and trauma many refugees endure prior to resettlement coupled with their lack of financial resources upon entry into Australia means that they are often vulnerable to housing stress, housing insecurity and homelessness. Despite these adversities, however, the AHURI *Housing and homelessness journeys of refugees in Australia* study finds that refugees can experience positive housing journeys following resettlement in Australia.
- The main instrument for data collection in the study was the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, designed to explore the housing and social inclusion experience of refugees in Australia. In total, 85 surveys were completed in Wave 1, 66 in Wave 2 and 53 in Wave 3. By the third, and final, year of the study's *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, 81 per cent of the refugees surveyed were located in private rental accommodation, while 13 per cent were in their own homes and paying off mortgages. However, 6 per cent of the respondents reported insecure housing circumstances including 'couch surfing'. The *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* focused on the position of Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa entrants.
- Despite those with positive housing trajectories, housing affordability challenges were evident among the refugees interviewed in the longitudinal *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*. Nearly a third of respondents were on public housing waiting lists seeking cheaper public housing accommodation in year 3 of the survey. 'Secondary' homelessness—temporarily staying with friends, family, or in emergency accommodation, or 'couch surfing'—was identified as an issue of concern following the first wave of data collection. But this had fallen significantly by the third year of data collection. Most of the refugees in the study, who had experienced couch surfing at earlier stages, had successfully moved into stable permanent accommodation (private rental accommodation or home ownership) by the third year of data collection.
- Of those respondents who resided in stable accommodation at the time of the final interview, most reported high levels of satisfaction with the physical quality and standard of their home. Over the duration of the three waves of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, the reliance of respondents on service providers for assistance in respect to housing decreased significantly.
- Self-reported English language skills improved significantly over the course of the longitudinal study. More than half of the respondents reported they were able to speak English either 'well' or 'very well' at the final wave of data collection. Employment outcomes also improved over the three years of the study with half of the respondents reporting that they were engaged in some form of full or part-time employment by the third year of interviews. The study found the greater the success in the labour market, the lower the reported housing affordability problem.
- A group of 20 refugees who were known to homelessness support agencies and asylum seeker agencies to have experienced homelessness or at high risk of homelessness at some point since arriving in Australia were interviewed in-depth as part of the study. The group included seven people who arrived by boat and were detained in immigration detention centres. Those who had been in detention in Australia found stable accommodation following exit from detention with the assistance of the Red Cross. However, when financial assistance from the Red Cross or family members ceased, or, in some cases, when Protection visa applications were rejected, most entered primary homelessness ('sleeping rough') and/or were accommodated by homelessness services. Those refugees who slept rough also encountered violence and discrimination while doing so.

- Two 'clusters' of housing experiences emerged among the group of 20 refugees interviewed. Those in the first cluster reported frequent changes in housing, rough sleeping and/or secondary homelessness. These refugees had spent, on average, 45 per cent of their time in Australia in either primary or secondary homelessness. This group included former and current asylum seekers who held Protection and Bridging visas. Refugees in the second cluster of housing circumstances had a more stable housing pathway with only isolated spells of homelessness. This group included refugees who arrived on Refugee or Special Humanitarian Program visas and Partner and Tourist visas.
- The sample sizes involved in the studies undertaken do not allow us to make 'population-level' statements, but the rich interview data collected does provide insights into the difficult housing journeys experienced by some refugees and asylum seekers in Australia as well as the significant successes achieved.

## **Context**

Housing plays a fundamental role in the journey of refugees following resettlement in a host country. Housing not only offers shelter and security, but provides a base from which both community and social connections may be formed and education and employment links secured. Housing can also be a source of significant stress for refugees when they face high housing costs and experience difficulties in locating affordable accommodation.

Given the hardships and trauma many refugees endure prior to resettlement and their lack of financial resources on entry to Australia, refugees are often vulnerable to housing stress, housing insecurity, and, ultimately, to homelessness. This risk is exacerbated by racism and discrimination within the housing market, mental and physical health problems relating to displacement and the refugee experience itself, family dissolution through deaths and break-up of families, and poor English language proficiency. Unemployment and low income during the post-arrival period are also prime drivers of housing stress and access difficulties experienced by refugees in the post-settlement period.

The present study examines the housing and homelessness journeys of a sample of refugees in metropolitan Perth and Melbourne, after entry into Australia and investigates the challenges faced by refugees in accessing long-term permanent housing. The study also examines the effectiveness of specialist housing and other support services in facilitating positive housing transitions for refugees.

## **Research method**

The present study employs a mixed methods approach to gathering evidence on the homelessness pathways of refugees.

For the purposes of this study, the term 'refugee' is used as an umbrella term to refer to those who meet the United Nations' 1951 Refugee Convention as well as the following groups of people living in Australia (even where they may not meet the Convention's definition):

1. Entered Australia under Australia's offshore humanitarian program on Refugee or Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) visas.
2. Assessed in Australia as eligible for Protection and Temporary Protection visas and holding such visas.
3. Assessed in Australia as eligible for Bridging visas and holding such visas.
4. Asylum seekers seeking refugee status in Australia and living in the community following detention.

The type of visa a refugee holds (or does not hold) in Australia plays an important part in the housing journey they follow. The visa category that a refugee is on influences their access to accommodation and other supports, their rights and obligations, and the types of barriers they

may face in the immediate resettlement period. Asylum seekers living in the community face a particularly difficult housing journey given their restricted options and difficult financial circumstances.

The research design of the study involves the following components:

- A review of the policy context and the research literature surrounding the housing and homelessness journeys of refugees in both Australia and in two countries similar to Australia in both cultural background and welfare provisions, but also in terms of engagement with refugees; namely, Canada and the UK.
- A longitudinal survey of refugees entitled the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, which sought to elicit information on the housing and social inclusion experience of refugees, with a focus on Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa entrants, in Australia over a three year period in Australia (2012–15). The baseline wave of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* was completed with 85 refugees; 53 participants completed all three waves (a 37% cumulative attrition rate). The survey was conducted by a network of bilingual and bicultural workers in two migrant and legal resource centres, namely, the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre in Western Australia and the Footscray Community Legal Centre in Victoria.
- An in-depth survey, entitled the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* was conducted with 20 refugees identified by homelessness and asylum seeker services as having experienced homelessness or been at risk of homelessness since arriving in Australia. The *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* was not designed to focus on any particular refugee category, only those who were known to services as having been homeless or at risk of homelessness were interviewed. The survey used a retrospective, self-report 'accommodation calendar' which tracked every step of the housing journey followed by the refugee respondent during the early years of resettlement in Australia. This survey included seven people who arrived by boat and were then detained in immigration detention centres.

## Key findings

*Refugees are vulnerable to housing stress, housing insecurity and ultimately to homelessness following resettlement in Australia*

The existing Australian and international research from Canada and the UK, two countries similar to Australia in terms of background and policy towards refugee resettlement and asylum seekers, indicates that newly arrived off-shore processed refugees initially reside in transitional housing before progressing into the private rental market. However, some may relocate several times before finding satisfactory and affordable housing.

In the post-settlement period, the high cost of private rental accommodation serves as a barrier to accessing accommodation. Moreover, the extant research finds that some landlords discriminate on the basis of race, immigration and refugee status and large household size; further impeding refugees' attempts to gain access to appropriate housing.

The literature suggests that lack of employment contributes to housing access and tenancy sustainability problems experienced by refugees. Entry into home ownership is frequently delayed with only a relatively small number of recent refugees purchasing their own homes in the early years of resettlement.

*Off-shore processed refugees entering Australia on Refugee or Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) visas display a generally positive housing trajectory following arrival in Australia*

To understand the housing pathways followed by refugees post-settlement, the research team undertook the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, a longitudinal survey of refugees, primarily focusing on Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa entrants to

Australia (i.e., these respondents entered Australia as offshore-processed refugees). A very small number held a Protection Visa 866 at the time of the interview (i.e., they had been assessed while in Australia as refugees) and various other visas such as Partner Visa 309, Bridging Visa D and Bridging Visa E. In total 85 surveys were completed in Wave 1, 66 in Wave 2 and 53 in Wave 3.

Respondents to the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* entered private rental accommodation or short-term or transitional supported housing when they initially arrived in Australia. None of the respondents reported living on the streets at any stage following resettlement. However, several participants experienced secondary homelessness or tertiary homelessness (e.g., residing in boarding houses without security of tenure) in the early years of resettlement.

At year 3 of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, a substantial proportion of respondents (81.1%) were housed in private rental accommodation while 13.2 per cent had advanced into home ownership. A small number of respondents reported secondary homelessness circumstances at the third year of the survey; suggesting that some refugees experience a worsening housing journey over time rather than an improved trajectory.

*Housing affordability stresses and challenges were evident among the refugees interviewed but fell in year three of the longitudinal survey*

Over the three waves of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* (85 surveys were completed in Wave 1, 66 in Wave 2 and 53 in Wave 3.) respondents reported housing problems with the primary issue cited being housing affordability. The number of participants in the survey who indicated that they had difficulty accessing housing due to the high rental costs fell from 30 per cent in the second year of the survey to 15.8 per cent at the third year. Similarly, the proportion of respondents who strongly felt that the cost of purchasing a home prevented them from securing housing fell from 50 per cent, at Wave 2 to 29.4 per cent at Wave 3.

A clear link between employment (and consequently income) and housing affordability challenges was found. Of those participants who were unemployed upon completion of the third year interview, 55.5 per cent reported that the cost of renting prevented them from securing accommodation. A further 70 per cent of unemployed respondents at Wave 3 identified the cost of home ownership as a significant barrier to housing.

Racial discrimination was a key impediment for refugees in navigating the housing market. At the third year of data collection, 23.5 per cent of respondents strongly agreed with statements concerning the role of racial discrimination as a barrier to housing access. The number of participants who cited discrimination as a barrier to accessing accommodation increased from the first wave of data collection. This suggests that as refugees' length of time in Australia lengthens, they are more likely to be exposed to instances of discrimination and prejudice as they move out into the community more.

Applying for, and subsequent placement onto, public and community housing waitlists is indicative of a state of very low income and difficulties in accessing and meeting private rental accommodation costs. At Wave 3 of the longitudinal *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, the proportion of participants placed on public housing and community housing waitlists increased slightly from that of Wave 1 to 30.2 per cent. This implies that a considerable number of refugees continue to experience housing affordability problems for a lengthy period following entry into Australia in spite of achieving success in terms of sustaining private rental accommodation tenancies. Encouragingly, respondents who had been living in Australia the longest were least likely to remain on property waitlists with only 9.5 per cent of those who arrived in 2008 or prior reporting that they were on housing waitlists at Wave 3.

*The reliance of refugees on service providers for accommodation assistance decreased over time and there was generally a high satisfaction with the accommodation achieved in the housing market*

The study's longitudinal survey of refugees, while representing a relatively small sample (85 surveys were completed in Wave 1, 66 in Wave 2 and 53 in Wave 3), suggests that the reliance of refugees on service providers and housing assistance decreases significantly over time. For example, 42 per cent of respondents at Wave 1 indicated that they received formal housing assistance (as part of the resettlement process). By the second year of the survey, 16.9 per cent of participants received housing support services. This figure fell to just 8.5 per cent by the third year of data collection.

Most respondents (85.5%) were satisfied with the physical quality of their home at the time of the third interview. Little variation was observed between country-of-origin sub-groups, with all cohorts reporting relatively high levels of satisfaction with the physical quality of their housing. High rates of satisfaction were also evident when respondents were asked about the size of the house, with 78.0 per cent expressing that they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the size of their dwelling.

More variation was evident between respondents when asked about their overall satisfaction with housing. There was a tendency for those who had been in Australia longer (those who had arrived by 2008) to report higher levels of housing satisfaction, with three-quarters of this group indicating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the standard of housing in Australia. By comparison, 71.6 per cent of entrants from the 2009–10 group, and 53.9 per cent of entrants from the 2011 group indicated the same levels of satisfaction.

*Self-reported English language skills improved significantly over time as did employment outcomes for the refugees involved in the study*

Over the course of the three waves of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* (85 surveys were completed in Wave 1, 66 in Wave 2 and 53 in Wave 3.) self-reported English language skills improved significantly with more than half of Wave 3 participants reporting they were able to speak English either 'well' or 'very well'. Employment outcomes also improved with half of respondents at Wave 3 engaged in some form of full-time or part-time employment. At the same time, however, around a quarter of the sample were categorised as 'not in the labour force' (neither employed nor actively seeking and available for work); a proportion that had not decreased from Wave 1.

Sadly, a growing proportion of participants reportedly felt that they had experienced some discrimination in Australia. This finding suggests that as they gained more exposure to Australian society they were more likely to experience discrimination. In addition, over half of the respondents in this study felt that they could not trust most people (e.g., neighbours, health professionals, and police).

*Respondents to the Refugees and Homelessness Survey included both those experiencing long periods of rough sleeping and accommodation in homelessness services as well as those with short-lived experiences of homelessness*

Respondents to the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* (20 participants) were interviewed because they had experienced homelessness at some time in Australia or had been at risk of homelessness and were known to homelessness services and asylum seeker support services.

The housing journeys experienced by respondents *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* fell into two broad 'clusters' of housing experiences. The first cluster comprised those who experienced relatively frequent changes in housing circumstances and also experienced primary homelessness or secondary homelessness accounting, on average, for 45 per cent of



their time in Australia. This group contained asylum seekers who had been in immigration detention following arrival by boat. Respondents suffered violence and discrimination while sleeping rough:

I was in the wrong place at the wrong time and two were fighting and I walked past and they started on me and stabbed me. It was a small wound but it got my liver—I went to hospital. In Afghanistan you know your enemy, it's the Taliban, but here you don't.

People call me things and I just walk on past because in my heart I know I'm not terrorist. Because if I stand up for myself I might end up in fight, in prison or hospital so sometimes it is good to walk away. In this country I get bashed a lot because people see I'm Muslim.

The second and smaller group appeared to have experienced a more stable housing journey. Of this group, three participants held Refugee or Special Humanitarian Program visas and another held a Partner Visa upon arrival. A fifth participant arrived with a Tourist visa and then received a Bridging Visa E before securing long-term private rental housing with the assistance of their stepfather. While none of the aforementioned respondents experienced primary homelessness, they did encounter various forms of secondary homelessness such as using crisis accommodation services.

Almost all 20 respondents to the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* emphasised that they had struggled to secure a tenancy due to the high cost of accommodation in Australia, with unemployment and limited income serving as key contributing factors. The pressure of high housing costs was also named as a major barrier to obtaining a tenancy among those placed on public housing waitlists at the time of data collection. One implication of high housing costs preventing newly settled refugees from acquiring a tenancy could be that they remain on housing waitlists for extended periods of time. This may have poverty-trap implications, i.e., negative perverse incentives around generating own-source income through work and other means to maintain a position on waitlists.

## Policy implications

A principal policy implication from our findings is that the available housing and other social services provided to recent refugees who entered Australia through the Australian Government's offshore refugee and humanitarian program appear, in the main, to be successful in helping refugees secure accommodation. The majority of refugees who entered Australia under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program and participated in this research sustained long-term tenancies in the private rental market. Some progressed into home ownership after initial periods of support. Offshore processed refugee and humanitarian entrants generally negotiated their own way through the Australian housing market following solid foundational support during the resettlement phase.

Nevertheless, there were some offshore processed refugees (around one-quarter) who experienced serious housing affordability problems following the settlement period as evident by the fact that they were on public and community housing waitlists at year 3 of the study. Risk assessments should be undertaken during the initial support period following entry to Australia to identify those refugees considered to be at high risk of experiencing housing stress. Following these assessments, a case-managed program should be implemented to ease at-risk refugees' transition into the Australian housing and employment market.

Australia's housing affordability challenges, encountered by low-income earners, including refugees, requires a concerted policy response. Reducing housing affordability challenges remains of critical importance to refugees as well as other low-income groups. Australia's public and community housing stock is very small relative to overall housing need. It is unable to meet all the needs of many disadvantaged and low-income groups, including refugees. When refugees experience difficulties such as mental health issues, family violence and

homelessness, it is critical that they are informed of the available support services and priority housing access options.

The evidence in this report also points to the specific challenge faced by refugees in terms of racial discrimination and access to housing. It is recommended that refugees be assisted throughout the process of support with a multi-agency and collaborative approach to offer recent refugees more comprehensive and ongoing intensive support for those who need it in the immediate aftermath of resettlement.

In light of our findings and the apparent strong association between employment outcomes and accommodation affordability, emphasis must be placed on supporting newly-settled refugees' transition into employment. In particular, recent refugees identified as at-risk of prolonged unemployment or who are experiencing difficulty negotiating the Australian job market should be assisted by relevant services in locating employment opportunities as well as applying for and maintaining employment.

The experiences of homeless refugees in our *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* pointed to insecure housing pathways, which were strongly influenced by restricted support upon entry into Australia or following exit from detention. The cessation of Red Cross financial support or informal assistance from friends and family resulted in immediate crisis and rough sleeping for some of those interviewed, which led to direct emergency accommodation provision by homelessness services. The housing issues experienced by those refugees affected by homelessness were exacerbated by very poor employment outcomes and restricted access to jobs. This suggests an important area of future research. By including questions around refugee status in the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Specialist Homelessness Services collection, a deeper understanding of the prevalence, structure and impact of homelessness among refugees may be forthcoming, as well as further insights gained about their transition into and out of homelessness, and the effectiveness of support provided.

Given the pivotal role of homelessness and other emergency services in helping refugees and asylum seekers source accommodation, it must be considered whether these facilities are adequately resourced to manage their accommodation demands. Essential resources include interpreters and other multicultural services as well as the provision of rental subsidies and financial support for refugees who are facing dire economic circumstances when Red Cross support and other forms of financial and social assistance end.

The results indicated improvements to English language proficiency among the refugees interviewed as part of the refugee longitudinal survey. However, less promising results were evident in terms of the level of discrimination experienced by refugees and connections and inclusion into mainstream Australia.

As a multicultural society, Australia should incorporate more active and supportive educational and promotional campaigns around refugees and asylum seekers to support integration and encourage greater social links between individual refugees and other Australians as a means of reducing the impact of discrimination towards refugees. Educational campaigns may also raise awareness of the plight of refugees and asylum seekers, encouraging integration and inclusion of recent refugees into Australian housing markets and Australian society. The findings from this research suggest that the prevalence and impact of racism worsened for refugees the longer they stayed in Australia rather than improved, perhaps because of wider exposure to Australian society. Our findings support the contention of Beer and Foley (2003, p.27) that 'discrimination appears to be a major impediment to successful movement through the housing market and this prejudice comes from neighbours, landlords, real estate agents and the general community' and the results of the Australian Red Cross (2013) Inaugural Vulnerability Report.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Housing plays a fundamental role in the journey of refugees following resettlement in a host country. Housing not only offers shelter and security, but provides a base from which both community and social connections may be formed and education and employment links secured. Housing can also generate significant stresses for refugees, particularly when refugees face high housing costs relative to income and experience difficulties locating affordable accommodation.

Given the hardships and trauma many refugees endure prior to resettlement and their lack of financial resources on entry to Australia, refugees are often vulnerable to housing stress, housing insecurity, and, ultimately, to homelessness. This risk is exacerbated by racism and discrimination within the housing market, mental and physical health problems related often to the refugee experience itself, family dissolution through deaths and break-ups of members, and poor English language proficiency. Unemployment and low income during the post-arrival period are also prime drivers of housing stress and access difficulties experienced by refugees in the post-settlement period.

The present report examines the housing journeys followed by refugees after entering Australia. In particular, the study investigates the challenges refugees face in accessing long term accommodation and explores the housing transitions of newly settled refugees. The report also examines the effectiveness of specialist housing and other support services in facilitating positive housing transitions for recent refugees.

The present report is the second from our three-year AHURI study, *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion in Australia*. In Flatau et al. (2014), the housing, neighbourhood and social inclusion experiences and outcomes of refugees in Australia were examined. The present study focuses on the housing journeys pursued, and housing transitions taken, by refugees from the time of their arrival in Australia to the point at which the final interviews were completed with respondents. We also sought to understand and delve more deeply into the housing journeys of refugees who experienced some form of homelessness or were at high risk of homelessness.

The aims of the present study are to:

- Explore whether refugees access and sustain appropriate long-term housing following resettlement, identify the critical factors in successful housing transitions, and understand the barriers experienced by refugees in the Australian housing market.
- Analyse the extent to which specialist housing and homelessness services, general refugee settlement services and specialised refugee services, and mainstream health, employment and other social services are successful in facilitating the settlement process for refugees.
- Follow the Australian journey of those who experienced high levels of housing vulnerability and spells of homelessness, examine how and why some refugees enter homelessness, identify key characteristics of the refugee homelessness experience, and assess what factors enable refugees to transition out of homelessness.

The report addresses important research and policy questions about the housing journey followed by refugees: To what extent are refugees able to access and sustain long-term suitable and affordable housing? What are the key non-housing outcomes that are associated with their housing situation over time? What are the experiences of refugees with respect to homelessness and how have they navigated through spells of homelessness?

It also asks questions concerning the effectiveness of housing assistance and support programs and settlement assistance in improving housing outcomes and resulting non-shelter outcomes: What types of formal and informal assistance do refugees' access and what role does assistance play in the housing pathways followed by refugees? Are refugees accessing

housing, homelessness, and health services available to them when needed? How effective is the homelessness service response to those refugees who become homeless?

For the purposes of this study, the term 'refugee' is used as an umbrella term to refer to those who meet the United Nations' 1951 Refugee Convention as well as the following groups of people living in Australia (even where they may not meet the Convention's definition):

1. Entered Australia under Australia's offshore humanitarian program on Refugee or Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) visas.
2. Assessed in Australia as eligible for Protection and Temporary Protection visas and holding such visas.
3. Assessed in Australia as eligible for Bridging visas and holding such visas.
4. Asylum seekers seeking refugee status in Australia and living in the community following detention.

The visa category type held by a refugee while living in Australia plays a critical part in the housing journey they follow. The visa category that a refugee enters Australia on or which is applied post-settlement (or not held or applied as the case may be) influences the accessibility of refugees to accommodation and other supports, their rights and obligations, and the types of barriers they may face in the immediate resettlement period. These factors influence the housing (and homelessness) pathways refugees follow while in Australia. Asylum seekers living in the community face a particularly difficult housing journey.

Housing is understood to be a cornerstone of successful integration and engagement in society, the labour market and the broader economy. However, numerous studies conducted in the three countries we chose to closely examine in this report (Australia, Canada and the UK) suggest that refugees and asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable to housing instability and homelessness (see RCoA 2010; Hugo 2011; ASRG 2011; Dhanji 2010; Ernst & Young 2011; Richmond 2011; Tually et al. 2012; Berta 2012; Forrest & Hermes 2012; Fozdar & Hartley 2014, in Australia; Mattu 2002; Hiebert et al. 2005; Fiedler et al. 2006; Hiebert 2009; Murdie 2008; Carter & Osborne 2009; Preston et al. 2011; Francis & Hiebert 2014, in Canada; Robinson 2006; Bell Associates 2006; Phillips 2006; Robinson et al. 2007; Aspinall & Watters 2010; Netto 2011a, 2011b; Allsopp et al. 2014, in the UK).

Research shows that refugees experience difficulty gaining adequate and stable housing due to housing market specific factors, the impact of trauma, limited social connections with Australian society, poor English language proficiency and low employment rates. Within the property market, high rental costs and limited access to public and community housing creates housing stress, which often pushes refugees to the outer limits of the housing sector where they struggle to find adequate accommodation or meet their rental obligations.

The extant Australian literature on refugees and housing (e.g., RCoA 2010; Hugo 2011; ASRG 2011; Dhanji 2010; Ernst & Young 2011; Richmond 2011; Tually et al. 2012; Berta 2012; Forrest & Hermes 2012; Fozdar & Hartley 2014) suggests that offshore processed refugees generally use sponsored refugee-specific transitional housing options or rely on family and community networks in Australia to access private rental accommodation. However, the transition into the open market for such refugees is not always a smooth one. Offshore processed refugees may move between the private rental market, couch surfing within their community and extended family networks, various forms of supported transitional housing and primary homelessness. While the literature in respect of asylum seekers is thin, the housing journeys followed by asylum seekers in Australia are likely to be more precarious than that of offshore-processed refugees. In addition to the expenses of private renting, recent refugees may also find that landlords discriminate on the grounds of race and ethnic background, or on the basis of large household size. The presence of discrimination within the real estate market

accentuates the underlying housing access and sustainability issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers in Australia.

Poor employment outcomes significantly contribute to the housing access, affordability and sustainability problems endured by refugees following resettlement. Refugees often struggle to source employment in the initial post-arrival period, despite substantial numbers of recent refugees enjoying employment prior to relocation to Australia. High unemployment rates among refugees are influenced by poor English skills, a lack of recognition of foreign qualifications, and discrimination by employers. These factors can also have a detrimental impact on refugees' ability to navigate the housing market, especially when access to information and support is either minimal or not available.

The most extreme form of housing difficulty and vulnerability is homelessness. Homelessness is defined as the absence of safe and secure accommodation. It includes living on the streets, residing temporarily in supported accommodation for those who would otherwise be rough sleepers, an absence of adequate tenure rights which includes couch surfing and residing in marginalised forms of boarding and rooming accommodation. The overall prevalence of homelessness among refugees is unknown from the Census, from specialist homelessness service administrative data or from existing survey sources. However, Australian, Canadian and British research evidence recognise income, employment, English proficiency, discrimination determinants, family size, domestic violence and family breakdown, and a lack of information and support as key drivers of homelessness among refugees. Refugees may not explicitly identify themselves as homeless because of shame or reputation consequences; nor might they seek help for similar reasons. In many cases, refugees might not conceive couch surfing as a form of homelessness, but rather 'part of the immigrant experience'.

In this study, primary research evidence was gathered from two cohorts of refugees in Perth and Melbourne. The two cohorts were chosen via different methods and for different reasons. The first cohort was selected through a network of bilingual and bicultural workers in two migrant and legal resource centres: the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre in Western Australia and the Footscray Community Legal Centre in Victoria. This cohort was followed from an original baseline survey (the results of which were published in our 2014 report) through two further waves of data collection. The second cohort comprised refugees who had experienced some form of homelessness and who were known to support services.

Melbourne and Perth were selected as much for their similarities (a high refugee intake and suburbs with concentrations of refugee populations), as their differences, such as the economic environment (strong economic growth in Western Australia at the time of the initial primary data collection). In 2011–12, Western Australia (WA) received 10 per cent of Australia's humanitarian entrant intake, while Victoria received the country's largest intake at 32 per cent (Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) 2013).

This study employed a mixed methods approach and involved the following components:

- A review of the policy context and the research literature surrounding the housing and homelessness pathways of refugees in Australia and Canada and the UK, two countries similar to Australia in terms of background and policy towards refugee resettlement and asylum seekers.
- A longitudinal survey of refugees focused on off-shore processed Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa entrants, entitled the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, sought to elicit information on refugees' experiences of housing, and neighbourhood and key non-shelter outcomes over a three-year period in Australia (2012–15). The baseline wave of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* was completed with 85 refugees; 53 participants completed all three waves.
- An in-depth survey titled the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey*, conducted with 20 refugees who either experienced homelessness or had been at risk of homelessness since

arriving in Australia and who were accessed through homelessness and asylum seeker services. The *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* used a retrospective, self-report 'accommodation calendar' which tracked every step of the housing pathway followed by the refugee respondent during the early years of resettlement. Among the 20 respondents were seven people who arrived by boat as asylum seekers and were detained in immigration detention centres.

Baseline results from the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* were presented in a companion publication (Flatau et al. 2014). In the present report, the results from the follow-up waves of the survey are presented and compared to the baseline results to develop an understanding of the housing pathways followed by survey respondents over the two years from baseline. The baseline wave of this survey was completed with 85 off-shore processed refugees; 53 participants completed all three waves.

Refugees interviewed as part of the study's three-year longitudinal survey, which focused on the position of offshore processed Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa entrants, displayed a generally positive housing trajectory following arrival in Australia. By the third and final year of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, the majority of refugees interviewed were located in private rental accommodation (81%), while 13 per cent had achieved home ownership. However, 6 per cent of the respondents reported insecure housing circumstances (e.g. couch surfing). Housing affordability challenges were evident among the refugees interviewed with nearly one-third placed on public housing waiting lists at the time of the third interview. Secondary homelessness, in the form of couch surfing, which was identified as a pertinent issue following the first wave of data collection, had reduced in significance by the third year. Most of the refugees who experienced couch surfing had successfully moved into stable permanent accommodation (private rental accommodation or home ownership) by the third year.

Over the course of the three waves of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, self-reported English language skills improved significantly with more than half of Wave 3 respondents reporting they were able to speak English either 'well' or 'very well'. Employment outcomes also improved with half of the respondents reporting that they were engaged in some form of full-time or part-time employment by the third year. At the same time, however, around a quarter of the sample were categorised as 'not in the labour force'; a proportion that had not decreased from Wave 1. Sadly, an *increasing* proportion of participants reportedly felt that they had experienced some discrimination in Australia; in other words, as they gained more exposure to Australian society they were also more likely to experience discrimination. Additionally, over half of the respondents in this study felt that they could not trust most people (e.g. neighbours, health professionals and police).

An important focus of the current study was on the housing pathways followed by refugees who had experienced homelessness or had been at risk of homelessness. The second survey undertaken as part of the study was the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey*, which was conducted with 20 refugees who had experienced homelessness or had faced high risk of homelessness and were known to refugee support services. This survey used a retrospective, self-report 'accommodation calendar' which tracked every stage of the housing pathway followed by the refugee respondent since their arrival in Australia. Results from the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* were analysed to investigate the common pathways in and out of homelessness experienced by the sample.

Interestingly, despite not seeking to attract any specific group of refugees for the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey*, a number of respondents in the sample were asylum seekers who had been in detention. Overall, these participants secured stable accommodation (often with the financial assistance of the Red Cross) following departure from detention. However, when financial assistance from the Red Cross or family members ceased or, in some cases, when Protection visa applications were rejected, respondents generally entered primary

homelessness and/or were accommodated by homelessness services. Two respondents participated in a 'transect walk' and discussed their personal experiences of primary homelessness with members of the research team.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows: Chapter 2 discusses the policy context. Chapter 3 provides an in-depth literature review of relevant studies from Australia and a comparable review of the Canadian and UK experience. Chapter 4 outlines the study's methodology. Chapter 5 presents the results from the longitudinal *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*. Chapter 6 presents findings from the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* around the experiences of homelessness among refugees, and Chapter 7 provides a summary of findings and discussion of policy implications.

## 2 POLICY CONTEXT

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter profiles current policy settings in Australia (as at mid-2015) relating to the resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers with particular emphasis on the provision of housing services. Our sources include key Australian Government documents as well as academic commentary.<sup>1</sup> We profile the Australian Government's provision of settlement services and examine the impact visa category may have on the housing pathways pursued by refugees. There is a considerable difference between the policy settings and settlement services for offshore processed refugees compared with those for asylum seekers. These discrepancies have the potential to influence housing options and pathways followed. This chapter also updates and augments our previous report, Flatau et al. (2014) with respect to trends in the number and profile of refugees settling in Australia using both Australian and international data sources.

### 2.2 The United Nations Convention and resettlement policies

#### 2.2.1 *The United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention*

The United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as someone 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/her nationality.
- Is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UNHCR 2015).

The Office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the organisation mandated by the United Nations to lead and coordinate international action for the worldwide protection of refugees, promoting three durable solutions for refugees:

- Voluntary return to country of origin in conditions of safety and dignity.
- Local integration in country of first asylum.
- Resettlement in one of 22 UNHCR resettlement countries.

The UNHCR was established by the United Nations in 1950 in response to the millions of Europeans displaced in the wake of World War II (UNHCR 2015). The organisation has continued to respond to the displacement of many more millions of people from war and social and political unrest. The UNHCR (2014a) estimated that, at the end 2013, some 51.2 million people, up from 45.2 million in 2012 (UNHCR 2013b), around the world were forcibly displaced from their place of residence. Some 16.7 million (up from 15.4 million in 2012) of this total were deemed to be refugees with the majority (11.7 million) 'under the UNHCR's mandate' while the remaining 5.0 million were Palestinian refugees under the care of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Of the world's forcibly displaced people, 28.8 million were internally displaced persons, up by 2.4 million on the previous year (UNHCR 2014a).

The majority (86%) of refugees reside in developing nations (UNHCR 2014a). Pakistan is host to the largest number of refugees, some 1.6 million, who have mainly fled Afghanistan. Iran, Lebanon and Jordan were the nations with the next highest levels of refugees, hosting 875 400, 856 500 and 641 900 people respectively (UNHCR 2014a).

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<sup>1</sup> The overview of policy settings draws on the review of refugee policy in Australia and the government provision of settlement services to humanitarian entrants conducted in the first AHURI report in the series (Flatau et al. 2014).



Australia is one of 22 UNHCR resettlement countries, ten of which have established annual resettlement programs resettling 500 refugees or more referred by the UNHCR. These countries provide physical and legal protection for those living in perilous situations or have specific needs that cannot be addressed in the country of origin and will allow for them to become naturalised citizens (DIBP 2014a). In 2013, UNHCR resettlement countries accepted a total of 98 400 refugees, most of which were referred by the UNHCR. The United States (US/USA) accepted 66 200 refugees in 2013—well over half the total number of ‘resettled’ refugees. This was followed by Canada (12 200, 12.4%), Australia (13 200, 13.4%), Sweden (1900) and the UK (970) (UNHCR 2013a).<sup>2</sup> Australia’s total of 13 200 refugees includes both offshore-processed refugees resettled in Australia and onshore-processed asylum seekers granted refugee status through Protection visas.

Germany has by far the largest number of asylum applications, 173 100 applications in 2014, followed by the USA with 121 200 asylum applications, Turkey (87 800), Sweden (75 100), and Italy (63 700) (UNHCR 2015). These countries accounted for around 60 per cent of all applications in 2014. The Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Afghanistan, Serbia and Kosovo and Eritrea were the five top sources for asylum seekers in 2014 (UNHCR 2015). The number of asylum seeker applications rose dramatically worldwide in 2014 (up 45% on 2013) and will rise again in 2015. Against the global trend, Australia recorded a drop of 20.4 per cent in asylum seeker applications in 2014; 11 740 asylum seeker applications in 2013 reducing to 8960 applications in 2014 (UNHCR 2015). Its rank in the world, in per capita terms for asylum seeker applications in 2014 was 25; Sweden recorded the highest number of asylum seeker applications per capita in 2014.

### *2.2.2 Australia’s international obligations to refugees and asylum seekers*

Australia’s offshore resettlement program is managed and administered in partnership with the UNHCR and represents a voluntary contribution to the international responsibility to refugees for whom there is no other durable solution available (RCoA 2010). Australia also has international obligations as a signatory to a number of treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Under these treaties, Australia must respect and protect the human rights of asylum seekers within Australian territory (or otherwise engage Australia’s jurisdiction), regardless of how they arrive and whether they arrived with or without a visa (Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), n.d.). Australia is obliged to not return asylum seekers who fit the definition of a refugee back to a country where their life or freedom would be threatened; nor to send people to countries where they would face a serious risk of violation of their human rights.

## **2.3 Offshore and onshore processing of visas in Australia**

By 2014, Australia had resettled more than 800 000 people since 1947 through its Humanitarian Program (DIBP 2014a). The program’s humanitarian entrants all belong to one of the following three categories:

- *Refugees*: those who meet the UNHCR definition of a refugee whose claims are processed offshore and who are brought to Australia under its resettlement program (referred to as offshore-processed refugees in this study where it is important to distinguish this group from others).

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<sup>2</sup> This report was finalised as the surge of refugees from Syria moved into Europe in 2015. Australia announced that it would take on an additional 12 000 refugees on top of its current 2015 13 750 humanitarian intake target in response to the 2015 mass movement of refugees.

- *Special humanitarians*: those who do not precisely fit the UNHCR standard but are still under threat of persecution and have family in Australia.
- *Asylum seekers*: those who arrive in Australia and subsequently are granted refugee status. At the time of completing this study (2015), those asylum seekers who arrive or arrived illegally without a valid visa are detained.

The offshore program comprises visas granted to people overseas who are under the Refugee visa category and the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) category. Most successful applicants for resettlement in Australia are referred by the UNHCR.

Table 1 below shows the five subclasses of visa granted under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa categories (DIBP 2014a). Tables 2 and 3 below present trends in the number of offshore Humanitarian visa applications lodged and granted from 2009–10 to 2013–14 (DIBP 2014b). It should be noted that the figures presented do not include onshore Protection visas lodged or granted. In 2013–14, a total of 11 016 offshore Refugee and SHP visas were granted and 2752 onshore Protection visa grants were made, resulting in a total of 13 768 Humanitarian visa grants.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1: Australia's Offshore Humanitarian Program visa subclasses in Australia**

Visa	Subclass	Eligibility
Refugee	200	Those who have fled persecution in their home country and are living outside their home country
In-country Special Humanitarian Program	201	Those who are subject to persecution in their home country and are living in their home country *
Special Humanitarian Program	202	Those who are subject to substantial discrimination in their home country and are living outside of their home country **
Emergency rescue	203	Those in urgent need of protection due to imminent threat to life and security and are living outside their home country
Women at risk	204	Women and their dependents living outside their home country without the protection of a male relative in danger of victimisation, harassment or serious abuse because of their gender.

\* People entering under this category do not fit the definition of a refugee because they are living in their home country.

\*\* People entering Australia under an SHP visa who do not quite fit the definition of a refugee under the UN Convention but are still subject to substantial discrimination. They must have family in Australia. Priority is given to the immediate family of those who entered Australia under the Refugee category of the offshore program. They may be proposed by a person or organisation in Australia who must provide financial assistance, including paying for travel costs.

Since September 2013, the onshore component of the Humanitarian Program has been reserved for people who have arrived in Australia 'legally', seek Australia's protection, and who are found to be refugees in line with the Refugee Convention definition or the Complementary Protection criteria in the Australian *Migration Act 1958* (DIBP 2014a).

'Non-illegal maritime arrivals' (non-IMAs) who are assessed as fitting the Refugee Convention definition are granted Protection visas (subclass 866). During the processing of their claim, these non-IMAs are granted Bridging visas. Depending on their circumstances, including date and place of arrival, these visas may or may not permit individuals to work.

<sup>3</sup> Australia's Humanitarian Program in 2013–14 was set at 13 750 places, with 11 000 places allocated to the offshore component of the program.

**Table 2: Number of persons lodging offshore Humanitarian visa applications, by subclass and program year of lodgement, 2009–10 to 2013–14**

Subclass	Year of lodgement				
	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14
<i>Refugee</i>					
Subclass 200 (Refugee)	11,649	28,805	17,512	25,823	30,952
Subclass 201 (In–Country Special Humanitarian Program)	866	973	1,430	2,116	3,339
Subclass 203 (Emergency Rescue)	1	2	1	31	1
Subclass 204 (Women at Risk)	818	909	1,032	2,483	864
<i>Total Refugee</i>	<i>13,334</i>	<i>30,689</i>	<i>19,975</i>	<i>30,453</i>	<i>35,156</i>
<i>SHP (Subclass 202)</i>					
<i>Total Special Humanitarian Program</i>	<i>33,851</i>	<i>23,638</i>	<i>22,915</i>	<i>21,995</i>	<i>37,006</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>47,185</i>	<i>54,327</i>	<i>42,890</i>	<i>52,448</i>	<i>72,162</i>

Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2014b), Australia's offshore humanitarian program: 2013–14.

**Table 3: Number of persons granted offshore Humanitarian visas, by subclass and program year of grant, 2009–10 to 2013–14**

Subclass	Year of grant				
	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14
<i>Offshore Refugee</i>					
Subclass 200 (Refugee)	5,130	5,205	5,128	10,206	4,730
Subclass 201 (In–Country Special Humanitarian Program)	24	26	43	71	717
Subclass 203 (Emergency Rescue)	0	2	0	30	2
Subclass 204 (Women at Risk)	802	754	821	1,667	1,052
<i>Total Refugees</i>	<i>5,956</i>	<i>5,987</i>	<i>5,992</i>	<i>11,974</i>	<i>6,501</i>
<i>Offshore SHP (Subclass 202)</i>					
<i>Total Special Humanitarian Program</i>	<i>3,228</i>	<i>2,966</i>	<i>714</i>	<i>503</i>	<i>4,515</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>9,184</i>	<i>8,953</i>	<i>6,706</i>	<i>12,477</i>	<i>11,016</i>

Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2014b), *Australia's offshore humanitarian program: 2013–14*. The figures presented do not include onshore Protection visas granted to IMAs and non-IMAs. In 2013–14, a total of 2752 onshore Protection visa grants were made, resulting in a total of 13 768 Humanitarian offshore and onshore visa grants.

Australia no longer provides permanent Protection visas to those who arrive illegally in the country ('illegal maritime arrivals' (IMAs)). People who arrive by boat without a valid visa are immediately sent to immigration detention centres on Papua New Guinea or Nauru, for the processing of their applications.

While waiting for their protection claims to be processed, asylum seekers onshore may be permitted to live in the Australian community on Bridging Visa Es (BVEs) or may be forced to stay in community detention. From November 2011, IMAs who were deemed not to pose risks to the community (following health, security and identity checks) were eligible for BVEs. In addition, the most vulnerable individuals in community detention were eligible for BVEs,

including: unaccompanied minors, families with children aged 10 years and under and other vulnerable adults and families.

Those who are assessed as complying with Australia's protection obligations and meet all requirements may be granted one of the following Temporary Protection Visas:

- Temporary Humanitarian Stay (subclass 449)
- Temporary Humanitarian Concern (subclass 786)
- Temporary Protection (subclass 785).

On 5 December 2014, the Australian Parliament introduced legislation to create Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEV). SHEV holders will need to commit to settling in a regional community to find work or study in order to address the need to develop the economic and social structure of regional Australia. These visas will be valid for up to five years, after which time they will be able to apply for onshore substantive visas, including permanent visas (but not Permanent Protection visas).

People who are found not to be people in respect of whom Australia has protection obligations and who have no lawful basis to remain in Australia will be required by law to be removed as soon as is practicable.

## **2.4 The provision of settlement services in Australia**

The Australian Government provides a suite of services to address the resettlement needs of newly-arrived humanitarian entrants for up to five years from their arrival. These provide a broad mix of social, welfare and housing support and are set out in Table 4 below.

The Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) program is the largest of the programs relevant to the housing pathways followed by refugees in Australia. The program provides 6–12 months assistance with finding accommodation (short and long-term). The first AHURI report in this series, Flatau et al. (2014), contains in-depth information about the services available and the eligibility for HSS according to visa category. In addition to HSS, housing assistance in various forms is provided by the Settlement Grants Program (SGP), which is available to refugees who require additional settlement support after exiting the HSS for up to five years from their arrival in Australia (DIAC 2013). The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) and the Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) help to develop crucial skills that refugees will need to find accommodation and work in the long term, while the Complex Case Support Services (CCS) provides support to manage accommodation, financial or legal issues for up to five years from arrival for refugees with exceptional needs.

The Community Assistance Support (CAS) and the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS) are two programs available to asylum seekers or IMAs who have exited detention and hold a Bridging visa, but are awaiting a Protection visa (Communicare 2014). There is significant difference in the level of support that may be received by offshore processed refugees and asylum seekers eligible for various support programs. For our purposes, the most significant difference is between those who qualify for programs which provide direct accommodation or financial support for refugees, and those who do not. For instance, the HSS, which is not available to Bridging Visa E or Community Detention refugees, provides for 6–12 months accommodation and is often supplemented by other support programs. In contrast, eligible Bridging visa holders under the Community Assistance Support Scheme (CAS) receive accommodation for only six weeks, information regarding longer term accommodation, and access to innovative programs in housing and employment such as the Homestay Network.

**Table 4: Commonwealth funded settlement support programs available to humanitarian entrants**

<b>Program</b>	<b>When provided and for how long?</b>	<b>Who is eligible?</b>	<b>What <i>direct</i> accommodation support is provided?</b>
Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO)	Pre-arrival (offshore). Delivered over five days before visa holders begin their journey	Humanitarian entrants only. This program is delivered to those over the age of five who are preparing to settle in Australia	Topics covered during the course include: housing including renting and household management arrangements
Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS)	6–12 months from arrival	Humanitarian entrants only*	Assistance with finding accommodation (short and long-term) and property induction
Complex Case Support Services (CCS)	Up to five years from arrival.	Humanitarian entrants with exceptional needs	Support to manage accommodation, financial or legal issues
The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)	Up to five years from arrival	Humanitarian entrants and eligible migrants	Nil
Settlement Grants Program (SGP)	Up to five years from arrival	Humanitarian entrants and eligible migrants	The SGP funds organisations that provide four service types. Those receiving funding under the service type 'Casework, coordination and delivery of services' provide information, advice, advocacy or referral services in a range of areas including referral to housing services and advice on tenancy rights and responsibilities
Community Assistance Support (CAS)**		Eligible Bridging visa holders	Accommodation for six weeks, information regarding longer term accommodation, innovative programs in housing and employment, such as Homestay Network
Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS)*		Eligible Bridging visa holders for those assessed as vulnerable	Casework support including referrals for accommodation support

\* From 30 August 2013, the following two groups of asylum seekers who are granted Protection visas have no longer been eligible for the HSS program: IMAs who lived in the community on a Bridging visa E or who resided in Community Detention; and other asylum seekers who lived in the community, including Community Detention.

Source: DIAC 2013; Australian Red Cross 2013a, 2013b; NSPN 2012

In addition to the settlement assistance provided directly by the Australian Government, some assistance is delivered through not-for-profit agencies. Some of this assistance is funded through the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, namely, the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS), the Community Assistance Support Program (CAS) and the Community Detention program. The Australian Red Cross is contracted by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection to provide these programs.

ASAS was introduced in 1992 (DSS 2014). As part of ASAS, case workers from the Red Cross assist asylum seekers to access finance to cover the following: basic living expenses, general healthcare and Protection visa health and character checks. In addition, the Red Cross will provide referrals to health services, counselling, accommodation, education, legal service, social support and clothing and furniture. Asylum seekers are only able to access ASAS while waiting for a decision on a Protection visa. Once the decision has been made, they are unable to continue to receive financial assistance (Australian Red Cross 2013a).

The Australian Red Cross is the lead agency in delivering CAS (Buckmaster 2012). This program provides tailored services to individuals who hold Bridging visas and who are considered to have particularly high needs. The Red Cross provides case work support, financial assistance to cover basic living expenses, rent assistance and general and emergency health care, as well as material aid such as clothing, furniture, education, legal and social support. They also provide referrals to counselling, six weeks of transitional support, and emergency accommodation (Australian Red Cross 2013b).

The Community Detention program provides support to 'vulnerable people' (families with children, unaccompanied minors and other individual adults) to live in the community rather than an immigration detention facility (Australian Red Cross 2013c). The Community Detention program has been operating since 2005 and provides paid accommodation, furniture, assistance to access healthcare and education, and aids individuals to develop social and religious networks (Buckmaster 2012).

Beyond the Australian Government programs referred to above, not-for-profit agencies also provide support to asylum seekers and refugees. *The National Directory of Asylum Seeker and Refugee Service Providers* (ASRC 2013) lists all organisations that provide assistance to refugees. These agencies offer material aid, accommodation, financial assistance and services specific to refugees, detainees and asylum seekers.

## 2.5 Summary

Australia's resettlement policy for asylum seekers and refugees is complex and multi-faceted, and has its roots in Australia's international commitments and obligations to the United Nations *1951 Refugee Convention*. The experiences of people currently being resettled in Australia, particularly in regard to housing pathways, are strongly influenced by the policy settings of the Australian Government. Other powerful components include pre-arrival histories and UNHCR programs, the economic climate in Australia, the strength of family and community networks, and individual skills, resources and resilience. Support for offshore processed refugees is essential in the first 12 months and initiates a positive start to the housing career followed by recent refugees. However, the same may not be true for asylum seekers. Support provision is often limited and conditional, meaning that some asylum seekers slip through the cracks of the system or are excluded from the system of support altogether. Not-for-profit organisations have worked to support housing options for those refugees entering Australia as asylum seekers. We examine this issue further in Chapter 5.

## **3 REFUGEES, HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS ACROSS THREE COUNTRIES**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Securing stable permanent housing is critical to the settlement process for refugees to promote integration and establish a full and meaningful life in Australia. Doing so is especially difficult for refugees due to low incomes, limited social networks, and pre-arrival histories which often involve trauma. Asylum seekers confront further challenges beyond those experienced by offshore processed refugees, including the uncertainty of legal status and conditional, typically lower and shorter, levels of government income support, housing support and support for various other necessities of life.

As noted by Zetter and Pearl (2000, p.677), the existing extensive research literature 'documents the importance of housing as one of the cornerstones of successful reception and resettlement processes for refugees and asylum seekers'. Housing not only provides physical shelter, but also a foundation for emotional, psychological and cultural growth (Phillips 2006; Somerville 2013; Fozdar & Hartley 2014). Netto (2006) argues that the need for stable housing and forging social connections is particularly relevant for refugees who have often experienced long periods of displacement and uncertainty distinguishing them from others on low incomes.

This chapter reviews the Australian and international literature on the housing pathways and experiences of refugees and asylum seekers particularly with respect to the experience of homelessness. Our review complements that provided in Flatau et al. (2014) which focused on broader housing, neighbourhood and social inclusion topics.

We follow the Australian Bureau of Statistics definition of homelessness, which extends beyond 'rough sleeping' to an understanding of homelessness as the lack of a home, rather than the lack of a roof (ABS 2012d). In brief, the ABS (2012d) statistical definition of homelessness states:

When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

We begin this chapter with an examination of the Australian literature which suggests that the early housing journeys of refugees are heavily influenced by the different characteristics of and circumstances facing the individual refugee. These factors include education level, English proficiency, employment achievements and opportunities, past trauma and level of support received in Australia. This chapter then examines the UK and Canadian literature, two countries similar to Australia in terms of background and policy towards refugee resettlement and asylum seekers, in relation to refugees, housing and homelessness.

### **3.2 Refugee housing pathways and experiences in Australia**

Australia has a strong history of refugee resettlement, having resettled, by 2014, over 800 000 refugees since 1947 and having the highest intake of UNHCR off-shore processed resettlement refugees per capita in 2014 among of the 22 UNHCR resettlement countries (DIBP 2014a).<sup>4</sup> Despite this history, there is a paucity of research evidence on the housing

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<sup>4</sup> UNHCR resettlement programs for offshore-processed refugees represent one part of an overall picture on refugees. As noted previously, countries in the Middle-east and Pakistan house the most refugees in the world in refugee camps. There are also a very large number of asylum seekers in various countries around the world seeking refugee status. There were an estimated 866 000 applications from asylum seekers for refugee status recorded in

circumstances of refugees and less still on the particular pathways followed by refugees in Australia. Very little research has been conducted on the homelessness experiences of refugees following resettlement. Much of the literature is of very recent origin which limits our understanding of changes in housing outcomes for refugees over time. As noted by Forrest and Hermes (2012), 'there is little research from the LSIA [Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia] or elsewhere on the housing experiences of refugees to Australia as a category or into variations in their housing careers according to cultural backgrounds' (p.187). A key finding from the literature is that in the period studied (largely since 2000), refugees as a group have been particularly vulnerable to housing instability and have exhibited relatively low levels of movement from private rental accommodation to home ownership in initial years (RCoA 2010; Ernst & Young 2011; Hugo 2011; ASRG 2011; Berta 2012; Forrest & Hermes 2012).

Hugo's (2011) study on the economic, social and civic contributions of first and second generation humanitarian entrants used linked data sources from the ABS and DIAC over the period 2001 to 2006, along with interviews with families and key refugee service providers. A key finding of the study was that 'the proportion of humanitarian entrants (surveyed) who over this time period were able to enter the home ownership market was significantly lower than for other visa categories' (Hugo 2011, p.156). The Australian Survey Research Group's 2011 study of the settlement outcomes of new arrivals, commissioned by the then Department of Immigration and Citizenship, found that humanitarian entrants face similar difficulties to other newcomers to the housing market, but 'just more negatively: it is hard to find appropriate and affordable accommodation' (pp.36–41). Forrest and Hermes' (2012) analysis of the second *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia* (LSIA) also found that most refugees resettled into the private rental market, and were largely satisfied with their housing situation.

### 3.2.1 Initial housing support

As noted in Chapter 2, offshore processed refugees who arrive through Australia's resettlement program are provided with intensive settlement support in the six months after arrival through the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS). The HSS accommodation service 'provides clients with accommodation upon their arrival in Australia, either in long-term accommodation, or in short-term housing arrangements before sourcing long-term accommodation' (DIAC 2012). In addition to providing housing, HSS service providers are also tasked with teaching their clients about tenancy obligations and helping them to develop skills for searching and applying for rental properties.

Baseline results from our *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* suggest that HSS support is important in providing an initial housing foundation for refugees giving refugees time to adjust to life in Australia and explore longer term options in the private rental market (Flatau et al. 2014). However, Tually, Faulkner and Thwaites-Tregilgas (2012) suggest that there is a great deal of variation in outcomes achieved under the HSS across states and agencies and refer to instances of irregularities in rental prices set by private landlords. Flanagan (2007) deemed the expectation of recent refugees to successfully navigate the housing market and mainstream community services after 6–12 months as unrealistic, and identified those who were unable to adjust in that time as vulnerable to homelessness.

### 3.2.2 Pathways into permanent housing

The study by Beer and Foley (2003) is the only research in the Australian literature which seeks to map the housing and other steps followed by refugees, including both offshore processed refugees and Temporary Protection Visa refugees, following their arrival in Australia. Through interviews with 434 humanitarian entrants, Beer and Foley (2003) found that

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2014 (UNHCR 2015). At the time of completing the present report (late 2015), there was a surge of Syrian refugees moving into Europe. On 9 September 2015, the Australian Government announced that it would make an extra 12 000 humanitarian places available for people displaced by the conflict in Syria and Iraq. A number of countries including Canada and the United Kingdom also agreed to take additional refugees.



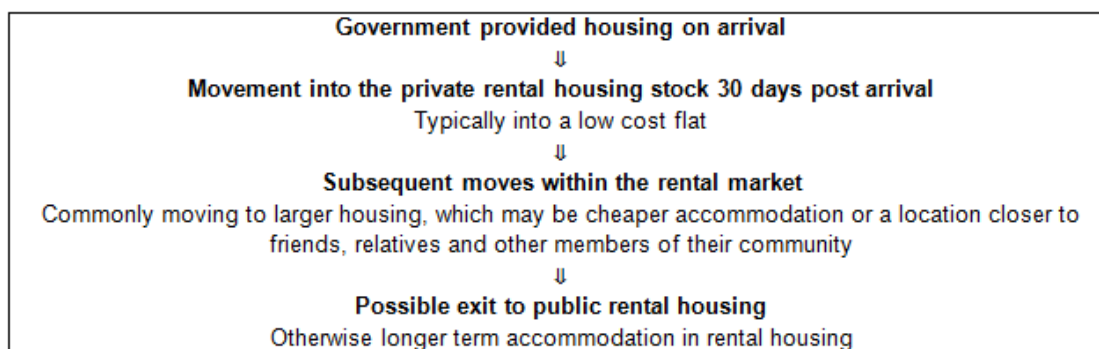
most refugees start in transitional housing before progressing into the private rental market. This change in tenure, however, is fraught with added difficulties including low quality housing, poorly located housing, insecure housing, neighbourhoods perceived to be insecure, and expensive accommodation. As a result of these issues, refugees may have to move several times before securing affordable and appropriate housing. A lack of security is evident due to termination of leases, over-crowding, and evictions (Beer & Foley 2003).

Tually et al. (2012) and the Refugee Council of Australia [RCoA] (2009) noted that transitions in the housing market can be accompanied by the severing or weakening of ties with support services, community networks, or family and friends in the local area. For those whose immediate lives pre-arrival have been characterised by persecution, discrimination, displacement and trauma, these moves can be particularly disruptive to the resettlement process and in re-establishing a sense of stability and of 'home'.

While few respondents considered themselves to have experienced homelessness since their arrival, Beer and Foley (2003) found that up to 40 per cent of their respondents had experienced homelessness according to conventional Australian standards. Risk factors associated with homelessness were identified as low income and a lack of capacity to pay rental costs, the chance of eviction, and inadequate knowledge of the housing market and tenancy law (Beer & Foley 2003).

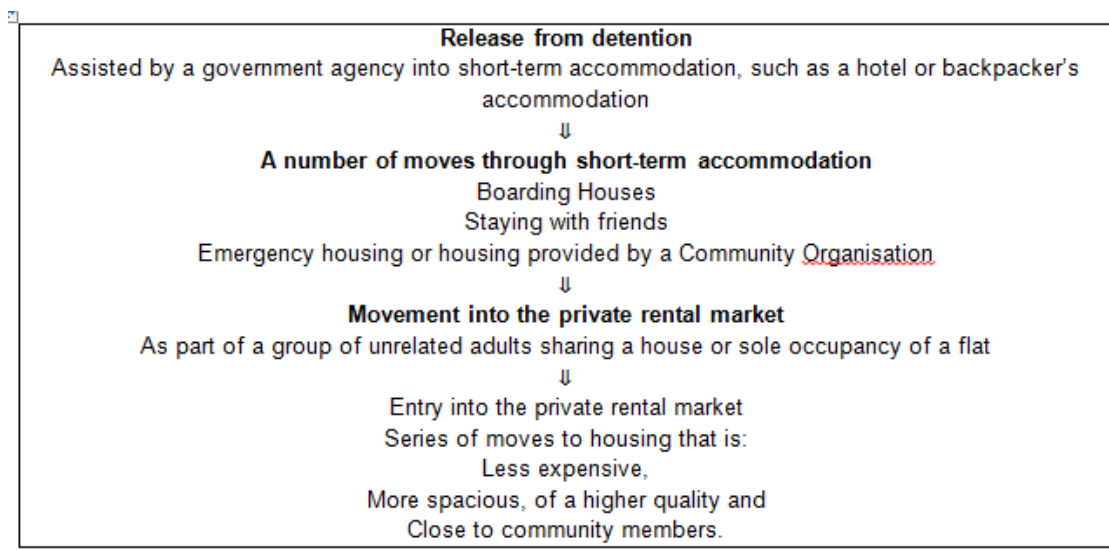
Figures 1 and 2 below present Beer and Foley's (2003) typical housing pathways of offshore-processed refugees and TPV refugees after arrival in Australia. The typical pathways followed by the two groups differ substantially from each other. However, in both pathways, private rental accommodation is the final stage in the initial settlement period.

**Figure 1: Housing pathway for an Offshore-processed Refugee Visa Holder**



Source: Beer and Foley 2003

**Figure 2: Housing pathway of a Temporary Protection Visa Holder**



Source: Beer and Foley 2003

In the case of offshore-processed refugees, entry into Australia is followed by a housing career focused around the private rental market, whereas in the case of those under TPVs, there are various pathways including moves through precarious housing options, transitions into forms of homelessness including supported accommodation and finally transition into the private rental market. Forrest and Hermes (2012) commented that Beer and Foley's (2003) study showed the housing careers of refugees as largely restricted to longer term rental housing, with a possible exit into subsidised public housing. The authors suggested that this posed a fundamental question: Is private rental housing just a first step on the ladder to home ownership, or is it a situation from which there is little hope of escape?

Home ownership remains rooted in the Australian culture and in the context of discussions of refugee pathways is interpreted as 'evidence of integration' into the Australian housing market. Forrest and Hermes (2012) analysis of the 1999–2000 LSIA data found that 6.1 per cent of refugees had begun to progress towards home ownership 18 months after arrival. A small proportion (around 13%) resided in government rental housing due to an ongoing situation involving large family size, low household income and, for some, the after-effects of trauma prior to resettlement. Hugo (2011) and ASRG (2011) also explored rates of home ownership, with the former finding that 21.1 per cent of humanitarian entrants who had arrived in 2001 owned or were in the process of purchasing a house by 2006, in comparison with a rate of 54.5 per cent in other migration streams. The low home ownership rates are consistent with those found in the ASRG (2011) study where 8.8 per cent of humanitarian entrants surveyed were paying a housing loan or mortgage or owned a property. As noted by Forrest and Hermes (2012), there is a need for longitudinal studies to examine whether an improvement in the rate of home ownership is evident over time; reflecting improved labour market outcomes for refugees.

### 3.2.3 *Housing affordability and discrimination*

Relatively high rental prices and low vacancy rates in the private rental sector in Australia in recent years have created barriers for humanitarian entrants in the housing market, along with other low-income earners. As noted by the National Housing Supply Council (NHSC 2013) there is no shortage of housing as such, but rather a shortage of suitable and affordable housing for low-income households. The constricted nature of the private housing sector poses considerable challenges for low-income households and, in particular, humanitarian entrants who have limited experience in navigating the private rental market.

Tighter private rental markets generate greater competition at the lower ends of the housing market. Tually et al. (2012) suggested that this rivalry gives landlords more scope to discriminate between potential tenants. Forrest and Hermes (2012) found that some 33 per cent of their participants experienced 'some' intolerance among Australians towards them in their housing search, while 8 per cent perceived 'a lot' of intolerance. The authors reported statistically significant differences in rates of discrimination according to cultural divides and cultural distance, with refugees from the former Yugoslavia less likely to be discriminated against when compared to more 'visible' refugees. Similar results were documented by Colic-Peisker (2009) who found that African refugees experienced more discrimination than ex-Yugoslav and Middle Eastern refugees because of their distinct physical differences and 'visibility' among the Australian population.

In addition to direct discrimination, other factors impeding access to private rental accommodation include income sources (especially Centrelink payments), lack of references and previous employment (Abu-Duhou 2006; ASRG 2011). Furthermore, the Australian housing market is ill-equipped to accommodate the large number of single refugees (predominantly males) entering through the humanitarian program as well as that at the other end of the spectrum, namely, very large families (DIAC 2012). Hugo (2011) found that obtaining sizable housing to accommodate large families was an issue raised in focus groups and key informant interviews, especially in non-metropolitan areas.

#### 3.2.4 *Employment and housing*

The high rates of unemployment among refugees post-arrival suggest that refugees face significant barriers to entry to the labour market. This not only limits their housing options, but more generally inhibits their integration into Australian society. Forrest and Hermes (2012), in their analysis of the *1999/2009 Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia*, found that 43 per cent of refugees surveyed were employed or owned a business pre-migration, while others were unable to work due to staying in refugee camps or because of war. Following resettlement, the percentage of those employed fell to 17 per cent resulting in a rise in unemployment (an unemployment rate of 14.6% was recorded). The authors noted that these changes were offset for some by marked increases in the number of refugees engaging in education and training options; 30 per cent post-migration relative to 7 per cent pre-migration.

ASRG (2011) in their study of 5378 humanitarian entrants across Australia found the proportion of employed refugees tends to increase steadily over time. By way of illustration, 19 per cent of humanitarian entrants who had lived in Australia for between one and two years were employed, and 39 per cent were employed by years four and five. Unemployment rates though remained unchanged and high (above 10%). In other words, there appears to be a transition from studying or training or other 'not in the labour force' categories into the labour force and increased labour force participation.

Significant barriers to employment exist for refugees that prevent them from successfully joining the labour market. The literature indicates that those proficient in English are far more likely to be employed than those who do not possess high English fluency skills. Hugo (2011) in his analysis suggested that more than a third of humanitarian entrants reported that they could not speak English well or at all, and among this group almost three-quarters (74%) were 'not in the labour force' and only 16 per cent were employed. Among respondents who spoke English 'very well', 40 per cent were employed. These results supported the findings of the ASRG (2011) study which reflected a positive relationship between English proficiency and rates of employment. For example, ASRG (2011) found that, among employed refugees, 52.8 per cent spoke English 'very well' compared with 11.5 per cent who reported 'not at all'.

The lack of recognition of foreign training and qualifications is identified as another major barrier in the labour market (Abu-Duhou 2006; RCoA 2010; Correa-Velez et al. 2013). Correa-Velez et al. (2013) found in their survey of 233 adult men from refugee backgrounds living in

Queensland that 75 per cent of respondents living in urban areas and 100 per cent of those residing in rural regions could not get their overseas skills or qualifications recognised. RCoA (2010) stated that many humanitarian entrants were able to have their qualifications acknowledged if they completed additional courses or examinations, but most entrants were unable to do so due to financial restrictions. As such, many are forced to enter the low-skilled labour market and rarely progress from there. RCoA (2010) criticised the lack of provision of services for such refugees to have their qualifications recognised. Similarly, an interviewee in Abu-Duhou's (2006, p.36) study suggested:

To allow the hours allocated for the free English training be converted into other training to help those who arrive with good levels of English to develop or transfer their professional or trade skills.

Other barriers in the labour market include lack of qualifications, lack of social capital and discrimination on the basis of immigration status, religion or ethnicity (RCoA 2010; Hugo 2011; Correa-Velez et al. 2013). The RCoA (2010, p.69) commented that:

Despite a general and culturally-ingrained desire to work, the challenges to obtaining employment outlined above mean that a number of refugees are forced, at some time during their settlement process, to rely on income support payments received through Centrelink, for themselves and their families.

These concerns are supported by the findings of the ASRG (2011) survey, where 85 per cent of the 5378 humanitarian entrant households were found to be in receipt of income support payments, in comparison to 28 per cent among those surveyed in the skilled migrants stream. Refugee households often have additional stresses on their income streams due to the need to send money to family in their home countries and/or owing money for pre-arrival expenses (Beer & Foley 2003; RCoA 2010; ASRG 2011).

### 3.2.5 Education

The literature shows that the levels of education of humanitarian entrants tend to be either similar or only slightly below those of the general Australian population and that adult newcomers often pursue studies in trades or at university upon arrival. A survey of 54 African refugees living in the Northern Territory found that 41 per cent of participants had earned trade or tertiary qualifications (Abu-Duhou 2006). Forrest and Hermes (2012), in their analysis of the *1999/2000 Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia* found that 33 per cent of refugees had tertiary qualifications upon arrival and a further 13 per cent had trade certificates. This compared favourably with the 2006 ABS census data which indicated that 39 per cent of the Australian population aged 15 years or older possess a technical or university qualification.

Forrest and Hermes (2012) reported marked increases in participation in education and training post-arrival; 30 per cent of refugees were engaged in education or training after arriving in Australia compared with 7 per cent pre-migration. The same study also found that the level of tertiary education varied according to nationality, with Afghan and Sudanese groups typically obtaining the highest level of tertiary education (64% and 47% respectively) and Iranians being, on average, the least educated group, with around 28–35 per cent possessing tertiary education credentials.

In ASRG's (2011) study, only 25 per cent of humanitarian entrants arrived with tertiary or trade qualifications, but 23 per cent of humanitarian entrants obtained a technical college or university qualification in the period one to five years after arrival. Interestingly, those most likely to pursue further study are those with trade or university qualifications. High rates of participation in education and training among refugees were seen as 'unsurprising', and a reflection of the focus on creating a new life after resettling in Australia with Australian qualifications crucial to this transition.

### 3.2.6 *Access to information and settlement support*

A common theme across the Australian literature is the importance to the resettlement process of ongoing settlement support sensitive to the needs of different individuals, given their past and present experiences (Beer & Foley 2003; ASeTTS 2008; Hugo 2011).

The Humanitarian Settlement Service (HSS) is designed to provide refugees with comprehensive settlement support for the first six to twelve months following arrival in Australia, after which they are expected to be able to interact in the housing market without assistance.<sup>5</sup> It is argued that the expectation of refugees to be able to navigate the housing market and welfare system after a six-month period is unrealistic, particularly for refugees coming immediately from refugee camps with little experience of interacting with large institutions (Flanagan 2007; Tually et al. 2012). The UNHCR estimates that the average length of displacement of refugees has grown from nine years in the early 1990s to 17 years in 2009 (RCOA 2010). Prolonged periods of displacement prior to migration are likely to have negative effects on education, work experience and the acquisition of skills needed to navigate the housing and labour markets of a host country.

Furthermore, trauma can have a severe impact on the psychological health of individuals and their ability to trust and engage with others. Recent refugees may experience psychological distress from traumatic past experiences, such as war, persecution, social and political unrest and the loss of family and loved ones (RCoA 2010). Recent refugees may continue to suffer the after effects of trauma in Australia due to fear for relatives, anxiety due to war or resettlement, and discomfort in their current circumstances.

### 3.2.7 *Experiences of learning English*

Sound command of the English language is another vital component in the ability to effectively negotiate the housing market (ASSeTTS 2008), which humanitarian entrants may take years to acquire. The Australian Government provides 510 hours of free English language tuition to humanitarian entrants to assist with their settlement and integration in Australia (DSS 2014). In ASRG's (2011) study, 72 per cent of humanitarian entrants were found to have studied or were currently studying English. The majority (66%) were learning English through the AMEP while others were studying through Technical and Further Education (TAFE). In addition, survey respondents raised additional benefits of learning English, which included learning about living in Australia, awareness of how to shop and use public transport, advancements in job searching skills and assistance in creating friendships.

Hugo (2011) also pointed to a high number of refugees who entered Australia with low levels of English proficiency and actively pursued English classes to improve their proficiency. He also identified barriers to attending such classes as cost of transport, lack of child care, experiences of intimidation within the classroom or seeing problems around employment and housing as being more pressing. These findings concur with those of RCoA (2010) which asserted that inadequate childcare prevented access to AMEP classes by female-headed households, including women who arrived on a Woman at Risk visa. RCoA (2010) also highlighted that the formal classroom style curriculum is often not conducive to or the most appropriate way for humanitarian entrants to progress in English and advocated instead home tutoring or more informal classes.

### 3.2.8 *Homelessness pathways and experiences*

Despite the widely acknowledged vulnerability of refugees and asylum seekers to homelessness, there is limited academic and policy literature discussing the issue in any depth. Burns (2009) and Berta (2012) noted the failure of major government policy papers on

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<sup>5</sup> During and after this time, some refugees have access to other forms of refugee-specific support including Complex Case Support Services (CCS) and the Settlement Grants Program (SGP).

homelessness to specifically address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse ('CALD') communities, including those of refugee background. This includes the Australian Government's White Paper, *The road home, A national approach to reducing homelessness* (Commonwealth of Australia (COA) 2008), and The Victorian Government's *A Better Place: Victorian Homelessness 2020 Strategy* (Department of Human Services (DHS) 2010).

There is sparse data on the extent or trends of homelessness among refugees nationally (Tually et al. 2012). The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW 2012) collects administrative data on homelessness from specialist homelessness services, but only records birthplace, not visa category. Likewise, there is no way of determining the proportion of humanitarian entrants affected by homelessness as the Census does not collect visa category (ABS 2012d).

The existing research tends to be dominated by small-scale qualitative studies. Among these, Flanagan (2007) and ASeTTS (2008) identified housing instability due to large family sizes as a crucial element leading to homelessness. Large families frequently struggle to secure appropriate, sizable housing. DIMIA (2006, cited in Flanagan 2007) stated that of the 375 families that arrived in Tasmania under the Humanitarian Program in 2001–05, 86 (23%) families consisted of six people or more, and 29 families consisted of eight people or more.

Domestic violence and family breakdown are other common and noteworthy concerns contributing to homelessness (RCoA 2010; Tually et al. 2012). An SGP/specialist homelessness service worker in Sydney interviewed in Tually, Faulkner and Thwaites-Tregilgas' (2012, pp.31–32) study, noted that 'often it's to do with family breakdown, most of the time because of domestic violence' and that with the increasing and high cost of housing in Sydney, 'everyone I see is close to homelessness; if their tenancy expired, rent increases ...'.

RCoA (2010) identified a lack of appropriate services for refugee women who experience domestic violence, which may lead them to endure ongoing abuse. One instance was reported in Brisbane where a woman who was suffering domestic violence was offered alternative accommodation in Rockhampton, 620km away and without any additional settlement or social support.

ASeTTS (2008) and Couch (2011) highlighted common factors contributing to homelessness among newly arrived youth. Reconfiguration of families and strained relationships therein and a disconnect from wider support systems (e.g. schools and local communities) due to poor English skills, social exclusion and/or other factors appeared to be precursors for refugee youth homelessness. These problems may be exacerbated by 'extremely traumatising' past experiences of violence, persecution and displacement. Ransley and Drummond (2006, cited in ASeTTS 2008, p.15) emphasised that these experiences 'have a distinct impact on adolescent development and the transition to independence that requires specialised responses from the community'.

Some young refugees interviewed in Couch's (2011, p.47) study reportedly felt that there was no place for them within existing services while others felt uncomfortable or fearful of contacting service providers. This was demonstrated by one participant saying 'I felt the most homeless in the refuge because I was with people who would use drugs and it felt dangerous, or because the rules were too rigid and intrusive'. As such, young homeless refugees might perceive couch surfing to be their only housing option. Reports of secondary homelessness (couch surfing) from service providers in ASeTTS's (2008) and RCoA's (2010) studies suggested that couch surfing was the most common form of homelessness among young people (see also Flatau et al. 2015).

A prominent, large-scale study on refugee homelessness is Beer and Foley's (2003) survey of 434 refugees in Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane during 2002–03. Of those interviewed, only 24 respondents disclosed 'experiencing homelessness'. The authors noted, however, that most interviewees conceived of homelessness in a very narrow way. Beer and Foley (2003)

estimated that, when applying current Australian methods for enumerating homelessness, one-third of refugee and humanitarian entrants in the survey had experienced homelessness in one form or another while in Australia. As Beer and Foley (2003, p.40) stated:

There is a strong cultural component that predisposes the TPV holders in particular to see 'couch surfing' and insecure boarding house accommodation as part of their transition to Australian society rather than homelessness.

There is a limited body of literature on homelessness among asylum seekers. A number of commentators (including Burns 2009; ASRG 2011) have criticised the failure of the Australian Government to provide comprehensive housing support to asylum seekers living in the community (not in community detention), and the subsequent reliance on the community and not-for-profit sector to carry almost full responsibility of providing housing for asylum seekers. Asylum seekers in Australia are eligible to receive financial and health support under the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS) while they are awaiting an outcome of their Protection visa application providing they meet financial hardship criteria (Communicare 2014). The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) (2010, p.15) criticised the eligibility criteria as 'restrictive, in some cases outdated and often force people into destitution, poverty, crisis and homelessness in order to be eligible for a program'. A service provider described the risks faced by newly-arrived asylum seekers ineligible for the ASAS: 'Actually the most vulnerable time is when people first arrive, in the first six months. If they don't meet the exemption criteria they can end up sleeping out' (Kelly 2004, p.52).

Burns (2009) proposed the main challenges to accessing the private rental market as limited or lack of income, insecure residency status, no local referees or rental history and limited knowledge of Australia's rental market. Despite providing little evidence to support this claim, Burns' (2009) findings align with research from Canada and the UK (discussed in Sections 3.3—Housing pathways in Canada and 3.4—Housing pathways in the UK).

### 3.2.9 *Summary*

Housing is understood to be a cornerstone of successful integration and participation in the Australian economy. However, numerous studies have argued that refugees and asylum seekers are groups particularly vulnerable to housing instability and homelessness. Refugees can face difficulty gaining adequate and stable housing due to issues within the housing market itself, as well as due to other related issues such as employment, education, English proficiency and level of support and guidance received.

Within the housing market, the high cost of rent in the private sector and the low availability in the public sector due to high demand force refugees towards the lower end of the housing market. Most refugees initially reside in transitional housing before progressing into the private rental market, although some may move several times before finding adequate and affordable housing. In addition to the expenses of private renting, refugees may also encounter landlords who discriminate on the basis of race, immigration status, large household sizes or on income; further impeding refugees' attempts to gain access to appropriate housing.

Lack of employment contributes to housing access and tenancy sustainability issues experienced by refugees. High unemployment rates may be attributed to low levels of English proficiency, a lack of recognition of foreign qualifications, or discrimination by employers. Low levels of English proficiency or recognised education or training can also contribute in themselves to difficulty navigating the housing market, especially when access to information and support is minimal.

Critical factors contributing to homelessness include financial insecurity, large family size, domestic violence and family breakdown, and a lack of information and support. There is, however, an absence of accurate information within the literature as refugees often conceive of homelessness as being on the streets, rather than the broader definition used in Australia. This

may underestimate the number of refugees and asylum seekers experiencing homelessness in Australia.

### **3.3 Refugee housing pathways and experiences in Canada**

The Canadian refugee system is very similar to Australia's in that it works closely with the UNHCR with respect to its Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, for people seeking protection from outside Canada and administers an In-Canada Asylum Program for people making refugee protection claims from within Canada.

Canada, along with Australia, is a major contributor to the UNHCR resettlement program for offshore-processed refugees. It also has a relatively high number of applications for refugee status from asylum seekers within its borders (the number rising significantly in 2014). However, applications for asylum seeker status in both countries are relatively low among industrialised countries. In terms of asylum seeker applications, Canada ranked 26th in the world in per capita terms while Australia ranked 25th. Along with Australia, Canada agreed in 2015 to take on Syrian asylum seekers beyond announced targets for refugees. As with Australia, Canada provides resettlement support services, but has also tightened its asylum seeker policies in recent times and asylum seeker support is limited (as in Australia). It shares with Australia similar political, cultural and social policy traditions.

#### **3.3.1 Canada's Humanitarian Program**

##### **Resettlement schemes**

The Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) Department is mandated by the Canadian Government to coordinate and lead its resettlement program (UNHCR 2014a). CIC promotes three resettlement schemes: Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs), Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) and Blended Visa Office-referred Refugees (BVORs).

Government-Assisted Refugees are typically refugees referred by the UNHCR who will receive some financial support from the Canadian Government upon arrival. The Resettlement Assistance Program provides financial support to GARs who have been identified with special needs (Government of Canada 2011). The funds are used to help pay for meeting the refugee at the airport or port of entry, temporary accommodation, help in finding permanent accommodation, basic household items and general orientation to life in Canada. These funds are provided for up to one year or until the individual or household becomes self-sufficient.

Refugees or persons in refugee-like situations who are identified and will be supported by private individuals or organisations in Canada are referred to as Privately-Sponsored Refugees (PSRs). Settlement services for relocated individuals are provided by the private sponsor (UNHCR 2014b). GARs and PSRs have access to federally and provincially-funded employment and language services that cater to all permanent resident newcomers (Government of Canada 2011).

Individuals who resettle as part of a blended visa office-referred program are matched with private sponsor organisations. They receive financial support upon arrival which is funded partially by the Canadian Government and partially by the private sponsor.

Canada also provides protection to humanitarian entrants under its humanitarian-protected persons abroad visa class. That is, the Canadian Government provides protection to those who do not quite comply with the definition of a refugee under the UN 1951 Convention and 1969 Protocol, but who are still vulnerable and require protection through resettlement.

##### **Asylum seekers**

The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) processes the claims of those who enter Canada and subsequently apply for asylum (IRB 2014). People in this group are issued a Temporary visa and the status of 'refugee claimant'. In Australia and the UK, people under the



same category are called 'asylum seekers' and so for consistency 'refugee claimants' in Canada will instead be referred to as asylum seekers in this paper.

Asylum seekers may make a claim based on the provision of the Refugee Convention but not through the Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad Class (UNHCR 2014b). Asylum seekers are issued a temporary national insurance number and may apply for temporary work permits also. Asylum seekers have access to mainstream benefits equal to citizens, including social housing and homelessness services. However, they do not have access to free healthcare (other than in emergency cases), settlement services (including federally-funded language classes, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) or other programs that are reserved for refugees and/or permanent residents (IRB 2014). Those who the IRB determine to be in need of protection are granted the 'protected person' status. Individuals who are granted permanent residency are then referred to as 'Landed-in-Canada Refugees' (LCRs).

### *3.3.2 Factors influencing housing pathways*

There are a number of longitudinal analyses of housing careers of refugees and asylum seekers in major Canadian cities (Hiebert 2009; Murdie 2008; Carter & Osborne 2009; Preston et al. 2011). These analyses revealed common barriers in the housing market, with the primary barrier being housing affordability. However, as in Australia, the empirical research and policy documents on refugee housing in Canada is scarce relative to the large body of literature on immigrant housing. Furthermore, there is a lack of research into the vulnerability to, or frequency of, homelessness among refugees in Canada (Kilbride et al. 2006; Yu et al. 2007).

#### **Settlement services and access to information**

Upon arrival, sponsored refugees are typically met by resettlement workers at the airport or port-of-entry. They are then accompanied to transitional accommodation and granted financial and federal support for up to one year to find and retain permanent housing.

There is some debate about the benefits of this assistance. On one hand, Murdie (2008) stated that this support provides refugees with a distinct advantage in their initial housing search. The housing workers can help refugees to overcome language barriers and financial support offers refugees greater credibility when negotiating with potential landlords. Conversely, Landau (2006, cited in Netto 2011b) cautioned that granting such assistance is not only expensive but also risks fostering dependency, isolationism and resentment from the local mainstream population. Landau (2006) suggested, alternatively, that refugee support should be provided within the context of the anti-poverty initiatives of the socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods they may occupy.

However, Landau's (2006) remark ignores the fact that sponsored refugees may also rely on other sources of informal support. Those interviewed in Carter and Osborne's (2009) Winnipeg study relied heavily upon the support of family and friends initially and also on information from government, real estate and rental agencies. They also expressed frustration at the absence of a source of reliable, comprehensive and current information on housing.

Asylum seekers in Canada have had a very different experience to offshore processed refugees entering Canada via UNHCR resettlement programs. They do not receive any formal federal support during the processing of their claim. Upon arrival, asylum seekers are reliant upon their limited financial resources, settlement agencies and the informal support from family, friends or members of co-ethnic groups (Rose & Ray 2001; Hiebert et al. 2005). In Murdie's (2008) study, 24 asylum seekers in Toronto were interviewed. One-third reported having spent the first night in Toronto at a hostel or shelter, while approximately another third resided with family or friends. The remaining participants reportedly spent the first night 'wherever they could find a place', which included a motel, church, a stranger's house or on the street (Murdie 2008, p.92).

Hiebert, D'Addario and Sherrel (2005) noted that the situation for asylum seekers immediately upon arrival has improved since the introduction of the Red Cross First-Contact services in Toronto and Vancouver in 2002 and 2008, respectively. The newcomers have access to workers in the drop-in centres who are fluent in several languages, along with resource packages and a 24/7 telephone service. These resources provide information about emergency settlement services and referrals to settlement, legal, paralegal, health and other services and thereby reduce the risk of homelessness and exploitation (Canadian Red Cross n.d.).

Kissoon (2010) criticised the absence of a national system of formal support. She instead advocated for a system similar to National Asylum Seeker Support (NASS) (see Section 3.4—Housing pathways in the UK) based on equality and choice, which would provide an alternative to homeless shelters. This would therefore ameliorate the conditions of many during this period of 'extreme stress'.

### **Housing affordability and income**

Hyndman (2011), in her meta-analysis of the literature, identified the 'affordability of housing' and low vacancy rates as the primary factor inhibiting success in the housing market. The average vacancy rate in Toronto's private rental market was 1.7 per cent in 2014, mirroring the low rates in Vancouver and Montreal over recent years (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) 2014). Private rental costs are increased by these low vacancy rates, compounded by decreased construction of social housing in an expanding population (Preston et al. 2011; Francis & Hiebert 2014). As in Australia, these high private rental costs compound the low incomes of refugee and asylum seeker households and thereby marginalise them to the lower end of the housing market.

Refugee and asylum seeker households tend to have low incomes for several reasons, including limited financial resources upon arrival and low rates of social assistance. The low incomes are also a result of poor outcomes in the labour market. A number of studies have identified the low earnings of refugees and asylum seekers relative to the average Canadian levels. These include Yu, Quellet and Warmington's (2007) analysis of the earnings of different classes of humanitarian entrants based on the Canadian Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB). Through a statistical analysis of the incomes of refugees at one year from landing in tax years 1995 to 2003, they found that the earnings of PSRs and LCRs were similar at just below \$20 000. However, GARs reported the lowest earnings at around \$10 000. Both averages were significantly below the Canadian average which at the time of the study was approximately \$30 000. Yu and colleagues (2007) provided the explanations that LCRs had been in the country for a period of time before the determination of their claim, whereas PCR's employment was often arranged by their sponsors before arrival.

Hiebert's (2009) study also suggested refugees face barriers in the labour market, along with those in other immigrant classes. Through a statistical analysis of the labour-market participation, earnings and total incomes of immigrants in metropolitan Vancouver based on data on the Immigration Database in 2005, Hiebert (2009) compared four categories of immigrants: refugees (all types), family class, skilled applicants and business principal applicants. Hiebert (2009) found that, while refugees as a category, earned less across all variables, they are not the lowest income earner cohort. For example, Hiebert (2009) found that a refugee with or without English language skills and a university degree reported significantly greater income than a business migrant across the same profile. This is surprising given the immigration policies targeted to recruit refugees assessed under a point system based on factors such as education and language facility. Hyndman (2011) questioned whether such findings were a direct result of the set of settlement services available to refugees upon arrival as an advantage over other immigrants. She also unveiled the relatively unexplored themes in Canadian refugee research of the influence of long-term detention on refugees before resettlement and the effects of trauma on employment obtainment.

Factors found to inhibit job success included poor language skills, lack of Canadian job experience or references, low levels of social capital, discrimination against refugee status and difficulties in having foreign credentials recognised; all of which may lead to relegation to unskilled positions unrelated to recent migrant's skillset (Yu et al. 2007; Carter & Osborne 2009).

Physical and mental ailments may also prevent this group from attaining and retaining employment. Nearly all of the 39 refugee households interviewed in Carter and Osborne (2009) three-year longitudinal study had lived in refugee camps for many years prior to resettlement. The effects of such experiences included anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), along with physical health problems such as nutritional deficiencies and impaired visual and hearing abilities.

### **Discrimination in the housing market**

Refugees and asylum seekers also suffer from discrimination by landlords. This compounds the marginalisation in the housing market on the basis of income. This discrimination may be on the basis of ethnic, racial or religious identities. In Murdie's (2008, p.93) study, a respondent commented:

Very expensive to live in Toronto... hard to find a cheap place ... friend told me that if you are not white it is hard to find a place to rent from other whites.

However, Murdie (2008) also commented that it may be difficult for members of 'visible minorities' to recognise discrimination based on race if they had never before experienced it in their home country. This is perhaps supported in Preston and colleagues' (2011) study in which respondents did not mention racial discrimination as a barrier, either due to failure of recognition or due to the overwhelming problems of income and household size. In Francis and Hiebert's (2014) survey among 36 asylum seekers, 14 (39%) interviewees named 'immigration status' as a barrier in the housing arena. Notably, none of the 47 refugees mentioned their 'refugee status' was a barrier to securing tenancy. This may be due to the fact that refugees have greater credibility when negotiating with potential landlords due to their sponsorship under the RAP program.

Lack of credit history and references are also considered to be major obstacles in the housing market. Francis and Hiebert's (2014) survey of 83 sponsored refugees and asylum seekers found 36.1 per cent of respondents listed no references and poor or no credit history as reasons for experiencing difficulty with securing housing. Another respondent in Murdie's (2008, p.94) study stated:

The housing was available but the problem was how to meet the requirements of the landlords ... rent in advance, any document to prove that you have a job, having a co-signer ... credit history.

Moreover, the *2001/2002 Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada* found cost of housing and the lack of a guarantor or co-signor the most serious barriers faced by newcomers in the housing market (Statistics Canada 2005).

### **3.3.3 Homelessness**

A number of Canadian studies (Mattu 2002; Fiedler et al. 2006; Francis & Hiebert 2014; Preston et al. 2011; Hiebert et al. 2005) all proposed that asylum seekers and refugees in Canada are highly vulnerable to homelessness.

Secondary homelessness is frequently acknowledged as the most common form of homelessness. This may be in the form of living in overcrowded accommodation or sharing temporarily with family or friends. Francis and Hiebert (2014) interviewed 61 sponsored refugees living in Vancouver, and found that 46 per cent had lived with family, friends, in a shelter or a non-residence during their time in Canada. The figure was higher at 78 per cent

among the 36 asylum seekers interviewed. Asylum seekers in the study were found to be more likely to rely on family or friends and stay in shelters than refugees. These findings concur with Preston et al.'s (2011) study, which recognised a heavy reliance of these two groups on informal support through social networks. The high prevalence of hidden homelessness thus serves as a challenge to measure the extent of homelessness in the general refugee population (Hiebert et al. 2005).

Housing affordability is a common component identified as precipitating homelessness. Fiedler et al. (2006) interviewed African refugees living in Greater Vancouver and discovered that many had no opportunity to save money as a result of high rental costs, compounded with poor employment outcomes. The precarious financial position in which refugees are often left makes them extremely vulnerable to homelessness in the face of unexpected events such as eviction, increases in rent or illness.

As such, refugees may be forced to live in overcrowded accommodation, which is a form of secondary homelessness according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics definition of homelessness. The average rent paid among refugees in Francis and Hiebert's (2014) study was \$728 per month, consuming on average of more than 30 per cent of income for 83.9 per cent of households. Furthermore, the average household size was 3.22 and the average cost for a three-bedroom apartment in Vancouver at the time was \$1847 per month. Based on these findings it may be assumed that these households were living in inadequate and/or overcrowded conditions.

Other factors precipitating homelessness among humanitarian entrants in Canada are discrimination in the private rental market, eviction and lack of access to information and support services (Preston et al. 2011; Francis 2009).

#### **3.3.4 Summary**

The research and policy literature from Canada posits that the lack of affordable housing in Canada is the primary difficulty facing humanitarian entrants. With no national system of formal support, high private rental costs in conjunction with low incomes of refugee households, refugees are often forced to the lower end of the housing market. In addition, refugee households often face discrimination by landlords on the basis of their ethnic, racial or religious identities. Refugee and asylum seeker households with limited language skills, lack of Canadian job experience or references, and whose foreign credentials are not recognised may find themselves in unskilled employment. This can result in lower incomes and contribute to the difficulty of securing adequate housing. A consequence of the deficit of affordable housing in Canada is that asylum seekers and refugees who relocate there are highly vulnerable to homelessness, most often secondary homelessness.

### **3.4 Refugee housing pathways and experiences in the UK**

As with Australia and Canada, the UK works with the UNHCR with respect to its refugee and resettlement programs. However, the UK is not a major contributor, on a per capita basis, to the UNHCR resettlement program for offshore processed refugees. The UK receives more applications for refugee status from asylum seekers (the number rising in 2014) than Canada and Australia. However, on a per capita basis, it is ranked at about the same level as Australia and Canada in terms of total applications (24th in the world in 2014). However, as compared with Canada and Australia, the UK refugee intake (including approved asylum seeker applications) represents a much larger share of its overall immigration intake. As with Australia and Canada, the UK provides resettlement support services, but has also tightened its asylum seeker policies in recent times and asylum seeker support is limited. On 7 September 2015, the UK Government announced that it would be taking an additional 20 000 asylum seekers from Syria. It shares with Australia and Canada similar political, cultural and social policy traditions making it a useful comparison country.

### 3.4.1 *The United Kingdom's Humanitarian Program*

#### **Resettlement schemes**

The Home Office is mandated to lead and coordinate the United Kingdom's resettlement program, in partnership with the UNHCR. The Department has two schemes for resettlement. The Gateway Protection Program (GPP) offers a legal route for a specific number of particularly vulnerable refugees to resettle in the UK. The annual quota is currently 750 persons (UNHCR 2014c).

Refugees entering under the GPP are provided with furnished accommodation upon arrival. Home Office meets the full costs of resettlement in the first year, including a support package comprising housing, healthcare and education services along with access to English language classes and casework support services. After this time, refugees can continue to access welfare benefits via mainstream services.

The Mandate Refugee Scheme (MRS) allows refugees with close family ties in the UK to be resettled. There is no quota for the number of arrivals under the MRS. Refugees who enter under this scheme are entitled to claim welfare benefits and use mainstream services under the same conditions as British citizens. It is expected that the 'receiving relative' provide support and guidance to the refugee upon arrival (UNHCR 2014c).

There is consideration in both programs for those with special categories and/or needs, including medical needs, survivors of violence or torture, women at risk, children and the elderly. The Home Office may grant Humanitarian Protection (HP) or Discretionary Leave (DL) visas to those who it deems should not return to his/her country of origin but are not quite refugees under the UN definition. HP visas are offered for periods of up to three years, at the end of which an application for indefinite leave can be made. Similarly, DL visas are offered for up to three years, at the end of which further leave may be sought. However, indefinite leave will not be granted until six years after the DL visa was first granted. People on HP and DL are entitled to work, claim benefits and apply for housing (Bell Associates 2006).

#### **Asylum seekers**

The UK Home Office processes the claims of those who enter the UK and subsequently apply for asylum. Individuals deemed to fit the UN definition of refugee and who are in need of protection are granted a Temporary visa of five years. The move from granting permanent refugee status to a temporary one commenced with the 2006 *Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act*. At the end of this period, country information is reviewed and if conditions in the country of origin have not stabilised then refugees may be granted permanent protection (Stewart & Mulvey 2014).

Individuals who fail to comply with the definition of refugee will either be granted temporary protection on humanitarian grounds (and given 'Humanitarian Protection' status or 'discretionary leave' to stay) or will be required to leave the country immediately. Some individuals opt to stay in the country illegally and thus find themselves in a particularly vulnerable position in the housing market (Phillips 2006).

Asylum seekers are not eligible to work and do not have access to mainstream services. They may, however, receive accommodation or financial support through the Asylum Support Service provided by the UK Border Agency. Previously this role belonged to the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) (Aspinall & Watters 2010). Accommodation is provided on a no-choice basis in 12 dispersal areas around the UK, including Scotland. The accommodation is typically a flat or share house with cooking and washing facilities. Bedding and basic furniture and housing equipment is also provided.

Financial support may also be provided by the UK Border Agency. At the time of this report, the support rate for a single person aged 18 and over was £36.62 per week. The support rates

have been frozen since 2011. The NGO Refugee Action pursued legal action over the 'irrational' decision not to increase support rates in 2013/14 in line with incremental costs of living; the Secretary of State has now been ordered to reassess her decision (Allsopp et al. 2014).

Upon a positive determination of claim, this support is terminated and the newly-recognised refugee claimant has 28 days to vacate their accommodation. Those who are not recognised by Home Office as requiring protection and who have exhausted the appeals process cease to be eligible for asylum support and are required to leave the country.

### 3.4.2 *Factors influencing housing pathways*

The housing careers of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK are well documented and are in many ways mediated by the legislative categorisations of this group into 'asylum seekers' and then as 'refugees' and 'homeless people' (Robinson 2006; Bell Associates 2006; Robinson et al. 2007; Aspinall & Watters 2010).

#### **Settlement services**

Refugees entering under the GPP are given temporary accommodation upon arrival in the UK. This may be followed by relocation to another city, where the refugee may live until they receive an offer of council housing. Each refugee household is allocated a case worker upon arrival. Home Office also meets the costs of resettlement in the first year and provides a package of support services, including access to English language classes. After this period, the resettled refugees must start to pay their own rent and other living expenses. They are, however, eligible to access welfare benefits through mainstream services.

Robinson, Reeve and Casey (2007) mapped the typical housing pathway of ten Liberian refugees living in Sheffield who had entered under the Gateway Program, as shown in Figure 3 below. Nine of the ten respondents received offers of council housing within two months of moving to the UK and the other respondent had moved into a house in the private rental sector.

The pathways of asylum seekers into settled housing tend to be much more variable. NASS provides accommodation and other support to those asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute. According to the definition in section 95(3) of the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*, a person is destitute if:

- He/she does not have adequate accommodation or any means of obtaining it (whether or not his other essential living needs are met), or
- He/she has adequate accommodation or the means of obtaining it, but cannot meet his other essential living needs.

Many asylum seekers arrive at their host country with few resources and little or no social contacts. Given they are not permitted to work, nor are eligible for welfare benefits, many have no choice but to approach NASS. Robinson, Reeve and Casey (2007) interviewed 10 Somalis who had been asylum seekers in the UK and mapped the typical housing pathway, shown in Figure 4 below.

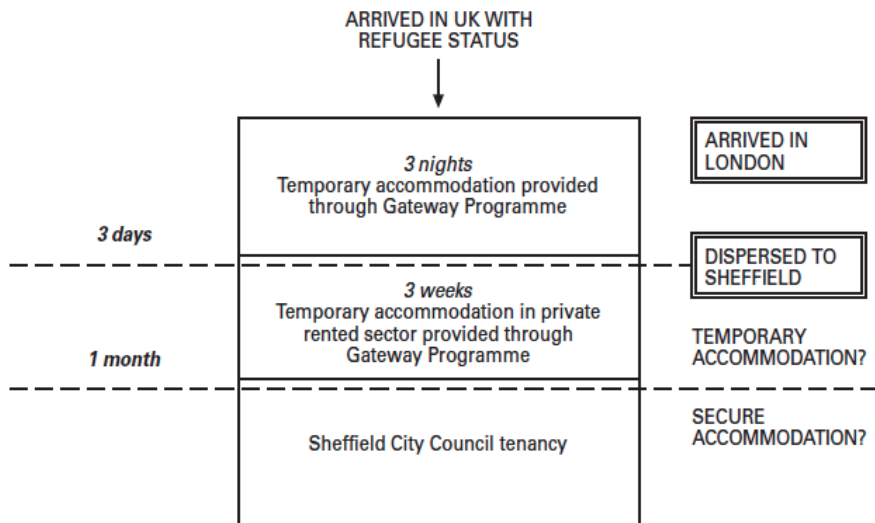
There are some asylum seekers who move away from the regions of which they were dispersed before the determination of their claim. Allsopp, Sigona and Phillimore (2014) noted the various pieces of research on this group, which reflected high rates of mobility and especially secondary movement back to London. They cited Robinson, Andersson and Musterd's (2003) study which tracked 56 000 asylum seekers dispersed by NASS. It was found that over a period of 21 months one-fifth of the participants had moved while waiting for a decision from the Home Office, mainly due to harassment in dispersal regions or feelings of isolation from community. This group and those who opted to find their own accommodation

from the outset must rely on their own resources and/or social capital, deeming them highly susceptible to homelessness.

Kissoon (2010) criticised the failure to provide alternatives to (the then) NASS housing, describing it as a way of the UK Government 'using destitution to compel people to dispersal'. Furthermore, Netto (2011b) and Phillips (2006) criticised the increasingly stringent welfare and housing entitlements as a suite of immigration measures designed to deter and control the flow of new arrivals in the UK and other EU member states.

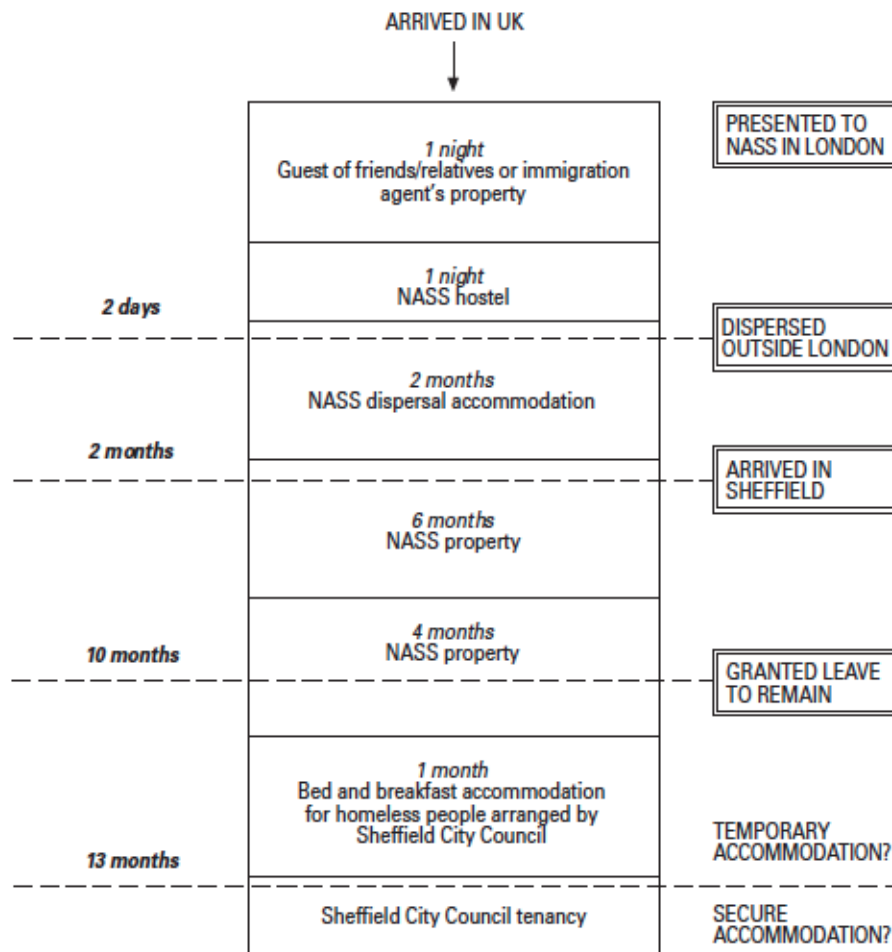
The positive determination of an asylum claim is greeted with relief, but fraught with practical difficulties (Netto 2011a; Phillips 2006). Robinson (2006) outlined the number of housing options or pathways available to this group, as illustrated in Figure 5 below. These newly recognised refugees become eligible for mainstream support. However, within the 28-day 'move-on' period any support is terminated. In this time people are expected to obtain alternative accommodation, furnish the dwelling and move in. This transition period has been widely criticised as being too short (Phillips 2006; Kissoon 2010). Moreover, Robinson (2006) labelled the expectation for those who have been living day-to-day to suddenly make medium-term decisions about their lives as unrealistic.

**Figure 3: A typical Liberian housing career: from arrival to secure accommodation**



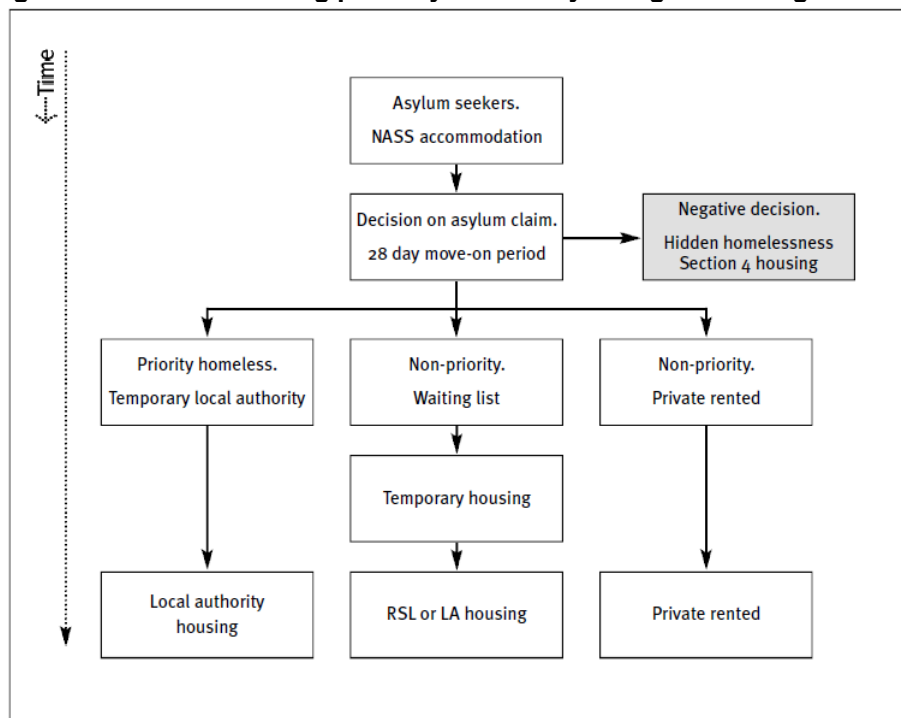
Source: Robinson et al. 2007

**Figure 4: A typical Somali housing career: from arrival to permanent accommodation**



Source: Robinson et al. 2007

**Figure 5: Possible housing pathways for newly-recognised refugees in the UK**





Individuals who can prove themselves to be vulnerable or homeless can apply to a local authority housing. Robinson (2006) learned in his study that high priority clients (including pregnant women or couples with children) could expect to be rehoused within weeks, whereas those with lower priority (for example, couples without children) may be on the waiting list for 12–18 months. Temporary accommodation is provided during the wait, typically in hostels or bed and breakfasts for homeless people.

Single people, who are over-represented among the homeless population, may not be deemed in priority need and must instead turn to private rental housing. Phillips (2006) identified lack of money to pay deposits in advance as a major hindrance in this market and thereby increases their vulnerability to homelessness. A housing worker interviewed in the study commented, 'singles disappear from the system, only to reappear on the streets'.

Phillips (2006), Robinson (2006) and Allsopp, Sigona and Phillimore (2014) criticised the ongoing 'laissez-faire approach' to refugee integration and the limited strategic provision of services for successful refugee integration into mainstream society. They advocated for increased cooperation between services to prevent gaps in services and to ease the transition into permanent housing so as to prevent homelessness.

### **Provision of ongoing support**

Netto (2011b) and Robinson, Reeve and Casey (2007) described the 'illusion' of security of tenure and attempted to address this gap by tracking the housing careers of more established refugees. They identified the vulnerabilities in settled accommodation specific to refugees, such as difficulties connecting and using utilities and the lack of furniture upon arrival. They also recognised factors that frequently trigger homelessness in the broader population, including relationship breakdowns, household expansions and the deterioration of mental health.

Netto (2011b) criticised the deficiency of on-going support available to refugees in council housing, which if present might enable them to overcome the aforementioned difficulties. In her study, Netto (2011b) interviewed five housing service providers and 32 refugees in Glasgow. Housing providers gave 'settling-in visits' to all new tenants in the first six weeks and referred those distinguished as needing support in claiming housing benefit and budgeting to appropriate welfare rights and money management agencies. However, her interviews with refugees revealed cases of poverty and mounting debt potentially leading to rent arrears and eviction, which implied that the current services were inadequate to address the needs of the target group.

Findings from Robinson's (2006) study suggested that these challenges are exacerbated by the lack of experience in household budgeting of newly-recognised refugees who had previously been staying in NASS accommodation. Housing workers interviewed reported that the policy of NASS taking responsibility for all household bills gives participating refugees unrealistic expectations of living costs in the United Kingdom. As one worker stated:

With NASS accommodation, they left the heating on 24 hours a day and the lights on 24 hours a day and they didn't have to pay anything ... we've had (newly recognised refugees) coming in saying 'I want a house but I'm not paying any bills'. (Robinson 2006, p.37)

In Phillips' (2006) study, housing providers and community support workers were interviewed in five English localities. Interviewees described refugees and asylum seekers as being 'parachuted' into deprived areas with little preparation, such as the collation of case material on new migration in order to meet their needs and the familiarisation of dispersed refugees with the locality. They also identified the need for a 'culturally sensitive, holistic approach' in settlement services that assists refugees and asylum seekers to access training, work experience (where appropriate), education and community networks along with access to

housing. One support worker referred to this comprehensive approach as 'a long-term commitment...that means putting in a lot of time and money' (Phillips 2006, p.547).

Robinson, Reeve and Casey (2007) noted that movement between tenures was rare in the housing careers of the new immigrants interviewed. That is, the refugee households interviewed commonly regarded council housing as the tenure of destination satisfying long-term housing objectives. When presented with problems in and around the home the typical response was to seek a transfer within the sector rather than to pursue opportunities in other tenures. The authors suggested that this 'tenure loyalty' was due to familiarity with the property, unawareness of the range of options available in the other sectors of the housing market, and inexperience in how to negotiate access.

### **Vulnerability to racist harassment**

The fear or actual experience of racial harassment from local mainstream populations is commonly identified in the UK literature as shaping the housing choices and pathways of refugees and asylum seekers. For asylum seekers, NASS social housing tends to be in relatively unpopular; peripheral estates with little history of minority group settlement and experience in accommodating difference and diversity (Robinson 2006). Phillips (2006) commented that when large NASS contracts are awarded to private contractors in low demand areas, rental costs can be artificially inflated which heightens resentment among the local population competing in that market.

Rutter, Cooley, Reynolds and Sheldon's (2007) study indicated the frequency of such abuse. They interviewed 30 refugees and asylum seekers and discovered that more than two-thirds of interviewees had experienced racial harassment, including name-calling, verbal abuse, damage to their property and, in a few cases, racially aggravated violence. Much of this hostile behaviour took place around the respondents' homes. Most of those in 'visible minority' groups indicated that they felt safer in multicultural areas.

The intolerance of local majority populations may be fuelled by the negative perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees in the media. Common perceptions are that these groups threaten 'British cultural distinctiveness' and enjoy 'luxury provision from the British welfare state' (Netto 2011a, p.125). A report by British Future in 2013 (cited in Allsopp et al. 2014) stated that four out of ten people in the UK believed that more than 10 per cent of the population were refugees whereas in reality the figure is less than 0.4 per cent.

For refugees looking for permanent accommodation, either through social housing or the private rental market, the possibility of racial harassment is often an influential factor in the decision-making process. In Netto's (2011a) survey of 32 refugees living in Glasgow, more than half of those interviewed (54%) considered that finding accommodation in their area of choice was a 'major problem', where the awareness of actual or potential hostility, often associated with their visible difference, would be a distinctive factor in their daily encounters.

In Phillip's (2006, p.549) study, support workers expressed their frustration when trying to meet housing demands in a hostile environment, as exemplified by the following case in Leeds:

We had to find a house with wheelchair access. It took months and months and finally, on day one, when we were trying to get into the house, local people were throwing stones at them so they had to go back to the reception centre again. That was the only suitable house; it might take six or seven months to get another house.

Netto (2011a) concluded that both refugees and service providers shared the view that the presence of others from the same or other minority ethnic groups acted as a buffer to racial harassment and facilitated establishing links with community groups. Yet Netto (2011a) also reported that some refugees preferred not to live near people from the same country, which can be attributed to the fear of being allocated housing near others who belonged to an opposing political faction in their country of origin. It can also be due to a desire to live in areas

where there are more opportunities for interaction with the mainstream population and to improve language fluency.

### **Levels of employment and income**

Low levels of income and welfare support marginalise refugees in the private rental market and can make them vulnerable to homelessness.

The former is a result of poor employment outcomes. There are a number of studies which indicate that despite having prior qualifications and work experience, many refugees struggle to find suitable work (Robinson 2006; Phillimore & Goodson 2006; Robinson et al. 2007; Aspinall & Watters 2010; Allsopp et al. 2014).

For example, Phillimore and Goodson (2006) interviewed 374 refugees and asylum seekers in Coventry and Warwickshire and found that almost two-thirds of respondents had obtained some kind of qualification prior to living in the UK and the same proportion had been in paid employment before arriving in the UK. Despite this, of the 99 respondents legally permitted to work in the UK only 21 per cent were engaged in full-time employment, 32 per cent were unemployed and a further 27 per cent were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. Three-quarters reported gross annual incomes of less than £10 349.

Barriers in the labour market may include poor English language or literacy levels, no prior UK work experience, lack of qualifications, waiting for a decision on case or immigration status, employer discrimination, qualifications not recognised, unfamiliarity with the UK system, and lack of information (Phillimore & Goodson 2006; Aspinall & Watters 2010).

#### **3.4.3 Homelessness**

A number of studies in the UK (Phillips 2006; Robinson et al. 2007; Aspinall & Watters 2010; Allsopp et al. 2014) suggested that asylum seekers and refugees are more vulnerable to homelessness than the general UK population. This is especially prevalent among certain groups and at certain stages in the asylum system.

Refugee Action (2013) and Doyle (2009) detected asylum seekers whose claims were refused and whose NASS support was subsequently terminated as particularly vulnerable to homelessness. However, Phillips (2006) noted a lack of data available on the housing circumstances of refused asylum seekers. Furthermore, Robinson (2006) interviewed key housing service providers in Wales. Some respondents indicated that co-ethnic communities frequently provided informal housing support to destitute asylum seekers, which would make it difficult to estimate the scale of homelessness across the entire group.

Asylum seekers who receive a positive decision on their refugee claim have 28 days to make the transition from their NASS accommodation into the private rental market. Robinson, Reeve and Casey (2007) and Phillips (2006) suggested that this period is fraught with practical obstacles which leave these newly recognised refugees highly vulnerable to homelessness. Refugees interviewed in both studies reported to have had no choice but to move in with friends or relatives or into temporary housing before finding permanent accommodation.

Furthermore, refugees may be granted accommodation for the general homeless population only if deemed in priority need for housing support. Robinson, Reeve & Casey (2007) criticised this highly subjective measure of vulnerability and commented that the system tends to present particular problems for single refugees. The authors found that two Somali asylum seeker participants who were not found initially to be eligible for support were forced to 'sleep rough'. This was inclusive of one woman who experienced primary homelessness for a total of nine months in her housing career and was still nowhere near a positive decision on her asylum claim.

#### 3.4.4 Summary

The housing careers of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK appear to be distinct. While refugees are provided with temporary accommodation upon arrival, allocated a case worker, offered support services and then made eligible to access welfare benefits, asylum seekers are neither permitted to work nor are eligible for welfare benefits. Consequently, the literature suggests that refugees experience a more stable housing pathway while asylum seekers experience more variable housing pathways. Should asylum seekers' claim to refugee status be accepted, they become eligible for mainstream support. However, despite being associated with a more stable housing pathway, refugee status provides no guaranteed security as there remains a lack of ongoing support available for refugees in council housing.

The lack of support, restricted incomes, lack of experience with household budgeting, racial harassment, poor English skills and foreign qualifications not being recognised result in high incidences of vulnerability to homelessness among humanitarian entrants. In particular, recent arrivals whose claims are refused and consequently NASS support removed are especially vulnerable.

### 3.5 Summary

A review of the available literature surrounding refugee housing and homelessness in Australia and comparable international counterparts, Canada and the UK, revealed a consistent set of difficulties faced by humanitarian entrants. In all countries, refugees are recognised as a group that is particularly vulnerable to housing instability and homelessness. The systems of support offered by these countries are argued to be complex, inadequate and in some cases, non-existent. The lack of comprehensive support exacerbates many of the issues confronted by humanitarian entrants to these countries, which include a lack of affordable housing, poor labour market outcomes, and racial discrimination.

In Australia and Canada the literature highlights the fact that the high rental costs are a primary difficulty facing humanitarian entrants. The research literature from the three countries examined proposed that the incomes of refugee households are often low and unemployment rates are high. Refugee households often have low incomes for various reasons, including low levels of English proficiency, a lack of recognition of foreign qualifications and a lack of job experience within the country of resettlement—all of which may result in refugee households being relegated to unskilled positions, and as a consequence, low-income brackets.

The low income of refugee households is a major contributor to the difficulty in finding adequate housing. Further, low levels of English proficiency, a lack of ongoing support and discrimination by landlords (on the grounds of ethnic, racial or religious identity, refugee status, or on household size or income) are significant barriers to accessing the housing market in all three countries reviewed. Other prominent issues include unfamiliarity with the system of the new country, and a lack of credit history and references.

In all three countries reviewed in this report, refugees were found to be subject to racial harassment which can negatively impact their attempts to integrate into mainstream society and impair their ability to secure adequate housing. This seemed particularly frequent in the UK, while literature from Canada posited that some members of 'visible minorities' may be unable to recognise racial discrimination—either because they have never experienced it before, or because housing and income problems are overwhelming.

Housing is understood to be a cornerstone of successful integration and participation in an economy and a country. However, the literature examined here elucidated that refugees and asylum seekers experience momentous complications accessing both the labour and the housing markets.

Furthermore, refugees can endure primary and secondary homelessness. In all three countries reviewed, secondary homelessness seems most common as humanitarian entrants are often

able to reside temporarily with family, friends or within their ethnic communities. Critical factors contributing to homelessness include housing affordability, large family size, domestic violence and family breakdown, and an absence of information and support. There is, however, a lack of accurate information within the literature as refugees often conceive of homelessness as living on the streets, rather than the broader definition used in Australia. This may underestimate the number of refugees and asylum seekers experiencing homelessness.

## 4 METHODS

### 4.1 Introduction

This report provides findings from two distinct components: a longitudinal survey titled the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, and a cross-sectional survey titled the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey*. This chapter will provide details of both components.

### 4.2 Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey

#### 4.2.1 Survey design

The *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* was designed to explore the housing and social inclusion experience of refugees in Australia focusing on Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa entrants. In 2013–14, the mid-point of data collection of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, offshore-processed Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa entrants comprised 80 per cent of all visas granted under Australia's Humanitarian Program. The remaining 20 per cent of Humanitarian visas were Temporary Protection 866 visas granted to both IMA and non-IMA applicants.

Given the study's budgetary constraints, we decided to focus data collection on refugees alone and not include a comparison group such as immigrants to Australia for which a sizeable literature exists. There is no accessible database of names and addresses of refugees in Australia and so we decided to use a network of bilingual and bicultural workers in two migrant and legal resource centres, the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre in Western Australia and the Footscray Community Legal Centre in Victoria, to gather a sample of respondents. This technique means that the sample of respondents we obtained was not a random sample of refugees, though subsequent analysis against existing data collections suggested it was representative of the refugee population in terms of the proportion of Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa entrant respondents, Temporary Protection 866 visa respondents and Bridging visa respondents.

Given that the survey sample was primarily generated through the networks of the bilingual assistants (BAs) conducting the survey, it is important to understand who the BAs were and the networks they used to create the sample. In total, the study employed nine bilingual research assistants to conduct surveys. All Melbourne BAs were current employees of a Community Legal Centre and accessed respondents through their professional and personal networks. The majority of the Perth BAs were employed by various settlement services and their respondents were often current clients or former clients. Each bilingual interviewer completed around 10 interviews. Given that the interviewees were drawn from their networks, the sample may well be somewhat 'homogenised'. BAs were asked to recruit respondents who had both positive and negative experiences. The use of BAs to recruit respondents kept costs at a manageable level, reducing interpreter fees and increasing survey completion rates.

The baseline wave of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* was completed with recently-arrived refugees in Melbourne and Perth from June to November 2012. The survey examined refugees' experiences of housing, neighbourhood, and key non-shelter outcomes. Over the three years of the project, two successive waves were completed with the same respondents, each one year apart (Wave 2 in October 2013–February 2014 and Wave 3 in October–December 2014). With the exception of certain demographic questions such as age, gender and date of birth, the same questions were repeated in each survey, allowing the research team to map changing settlement experiences over time. In the second wave of the Survey, we also undertook a retrospective detailed trajectory of the housing careers and homelessness histories of respondents in the section examining socioeconomic and demographic information. Some questions on social inclusion were removed in Waves 2 and 3 to ensure the survey was not too long.

The survey consisted of four sections: A) Administrative information; B) Demographic and socioeconomic information; C) Housing and homelessness; D) Neighbourhood and experience of living in Australia. The survey contained questions unique to the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* together with questions adapted from the *Living in Australia Survey* (LAS) and the *Australian Humanitarian Settler Survey* (AHSS), as well as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2010 *General Social Survey* (2011a), the ABS 2011 *Census of Population and Housing* (2012a) and the *Third Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia* (LSIA 3).

Further details on each of the survey's four sections is provided below:

A) *Administrative information*—This section collected information such as gender and the date of survey completion and included a code to link the respondent's contact details, which were recorded separately, to the survey instrument.

B) *Demographic and socioeconomic information*—This section contained questions on the respondent's country of birth, their ethnicity/ancestry, their English proficiency, educational attainment, current study arrangements, labour force status both current and prior to arriving in Australia, level and type of income, and whether or not the respondent provided financial help to family or friends overseas.

C) *Housing and homelessness*—This section contained questions on current housing and living arrangements, including current housing tenure, who the respondent lived with (that is, partner or partner and children), how much they paid in rent or mortgage repayments and whether the respondent was waiting to access public or community housing. This section also included an 'accommodation calendar'. This calendar mapped the respondent's housing tenure status for every two-week period over the 12 months prior to completing the survey. For example, if a respondent was currently living in a private rental of their own, we could examine whether this was the case over the entire last 12 months or whether there were periods of time spent in another accommodation setting, such as living with family or friends as they had nowhere else to live. Responses to this calendar provided important information on the refugee's ability to sustain tenure arrangements over a relatively long period. In addition to tenure arrangements, Section C also asked the respondent about their satisfaction with various aspects of their housing.

D) *Neighbourhood and experience of living in Australia*—Questions in Section D investigated the respondent's experiences of living in Australia by asking a range of questions on utility of public spaces and their access to public services. How welcome respondents had been made to feel in Australia and perceptions of racial or religious discrimination in their local communities and wider Australia were queried. Section D also sought to explore feelings of trust among humanitarian entrants towards people holding various occupations (doctors, police) as well as various institutions. Feelings of personal safety in a variety of settings were also investigated.

#### 4.2.2 Respondents

Survey respondents originated from nine different countries. These were categorised into three broader groups: Middle East, South East Asia and Africa. The sole South East Asian country represented was Burma; the Burmese comprised 26 per cent of survey respondents. The majority of respondents (48%) came from the Middle Eastern countries of Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, and the remaining 26 per cent originated from five African nations, with the large majority of these (92%) from either Sudan or South Sudan.

It is important to note that the survey results discussed in the next chapters pertain only to a relatively small sample (<100) of refugees living in major metropolitan areas who were able to obtain support from these centres. As such, care should be taken in generalising these results to the refugee population in Australia, particularly in regional and rural areas. Had there been

fewer difficulties obtaining a large, representative sample of refugees and a larger budget than that available, it may have been possible to also obtain a sample of 'non-refugee' immigrants, and compare and contrast the two samples to identify refugee-specific issues and impacts. This option will be considered in future studies.

The respondent's current address and contact details such as home and/or mobile number and email address were collected using a 'Contact Sheet' to help arrange follow-up surveys over the project period. In case of change of details such as a new home or mobile number, respondents were also asked to provide the name and contact number of their next of kin. This information was not stored on any database in line with ethics recommendations.

In total, 85 surveys were completed in Wave 1, 66 in Wave 2 and 53 in Wave 3. This represents an attrition rate of 38 per cent from Waves 1 to 3, which for the cohort in question, is in line with expectations. The cumulative attrition rate of 37 per cent in the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* compares with a cumulative attrition rate of 27 per cent at Wave 3 of Australia's largest social science panel survey (after accounting for deaths), the *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) survey. However, analysis of attrition rates in HILDA indicated significantly higher rates of attrition for attributes highly correlated with the present sample, namely, those in private rental accommodation, persons born overseas relative to persons born in Australia, and for those in households living in flats, units or apartments relative to households in separate houses, as well as for those moving house (Watson & Wooden 2004). The *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia* (Phase 1) had a Wave 3 attrition rate of 38 per cent.

Table 5 below outlines the key characteristics of the sample. In Wave 3, 55 per cent of respondents came from Perth while 45 per cent came from Melbourne; 57 per cent were female while 43 per cent were male. Over half of the respondents to the survey (51%) came from a country in the Middle East.<sup>6</sup> Thirty per cent originated from South East Asia while 19 per cent were from Africa. This distribution of countries of origin is similar to the wider refugee population in Australia, with the Middle East slightly overrepresented in this sample and Africa slightly underrepresented relative to refugee intakes for the period in question. However, it is broadly in line with the 2013–14 offshore humanitarian visa intake in which 50 per cent of all offshore visas were granted to persons born in Asia, 35 per cent to persons born in the Middle East and 15 per cent to persons born in Africa (DIBP 2014b).

One-third of respondents arrived in Australia in 2009–10, while 40 per cent had arrived in 2008 and earlier. The remaining 26 per cent had arrived in 2011. A more detailed analysis of the demographics of the sample is set out in Table A1.

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<sup>6</sup> This includes Afghanistan. According to the ABS Standard Australian Classification of countries, Afghanistan is a Central Asian nation (ABS 2011b). However, for consistency with DIAC, this report refers to Afghanistan as a Middle Eastern nation.



**Table 5: Respondents by city, length of respondent's residency in Australia, gender, household situation and region of origin**

	Proportion of sample:	Wave 1 %	Wave 2 %	Wave 3 %
City	Perth	48.2	51.5	54.7
	Melbourne	51.8	48.5	45.3
	<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0
Length of residency in Australia	2008–earlier	27.1	40.9	39.6
	2009–2010	34.1	33.3	34.0
	2011	38.8	25.8	26.4
	<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gender	Male	48.2	40.9	43.4
	Female	51.8	59.1	56.6
	<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	48.2	48.5	50.9
	South East Asia	25.9	28.8	30.2
	Africa	25.9	22.7	18.9
	<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0
		N=85	N=66	N=53

At the time of completing the Wave 2 Survey, 69.7 per cent of respondents held a Refugee visa (200, 201, 203, and 204) and Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) visas (202). In other words, around 7 out of 10 respondents had entered Australia having been processed and accepted offshore as fulfilling the requirements of the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa categories. A further 18.2 per cent held Protection visa 866. This permanent visa applies when the person in question is found to engage Australia's protection obligations because they are found to be a refugee as defined by the Refugees Convention or meet the Complementary Protection criteria in the Australian *Migration Act 1958* or are the family member of a person found to engage Australia's protection obligations. The remaining respondents were in various categories including Partner Visa 309, 'visiting visa', 'permanent resident', Bridging visa A (after originally coming as a skilled immigrant), 'not sure' and one on a Bridging visa D. As noted previously, in 2013–14, Australia's Humanitarian Program visa grants consisted of around 80 per cent Refugee and SHP visas and 20 per cent Protection visas. Hence, the sample in question is largely representative of Australia's Humanitarian Program in terms of granted visas and also includes those on Bridging visas and others self-identifying as refugees but not stating a visa category that can be usefully identified.

### 4.3 Refugees and Homelessness Survey

In addition to the respondents who completed all three waves of the original survey, a cross-sectional group of 20 refugees from Perth and Melbourne who were receiving support from homelessness services or were known to homelessness services at the time of survey completion were also interviewed as part of the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey*. These participants completed a survey adapted to provide a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the history of homelessness of those who had experienced a more volatile housing experience following resettlement in Australia. Homelessness and asylum seeker support agencies in Melbourne and Perth were approached to find potential participants to

complete the survey. Feedback from the agencies indicated that it had been particularly difficult to obtain consent from refugees who were using the support service to complete the survey.

#### 4.3.1 Survey design

The *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* was designed by Paul Flatau and Alicia Bauskis from the UWA AHURI Centre. This survey included a more comprehensive and in-depth range of questions than those included in the longitudinal survey and encompassed the following topics:

- Support needed and provided to respondents in a variety of areas such as housing, physical and mental health issues, and drug and alcohol dependency.
- The experiences of these respondents in refugee camps and detention centers.
- Detailed housing and accommodation experiences as reflected in accommodation calendars, with a particular emphasis on the transition into, through and out of homelessness.

#### 4.3.2 Respondents

Of the 20 respondents, 10 lived in Perth and 10 lived in Melbourne. The majority of respondents (15) were male and four were female. One participant did not record their gender. Six respondents had been living in Australia for fewer than two years; nine had been living in Australia for between two and four years while the remaining four had resided in Australia for more than four years. Eight respondents originated from the Middle East, while six originated from Africa and four originated from Asia.

Table 6 below details the visa status of the 19 respondents for whom we have this information, including their arrival status and current visa status; 37 per cent arrived by boat to immigration detention while 47 per cent arrived by plane on a non-humanitarian entrant visa. Of those who did not arrive with an SHP/Refugee visa, 56 per cent held Bridging visas at the time of survey, while four of the 16 held Protection visas. As compared with the longitudinal survey, the sample of refugees in the homelessness survey includes more refugees on Bridging visas who had arrived by boat to immigration detention.

**Table 6: Arrival status and current visa status**

Arrival status	No.	Current visa status	No.
Arrived by boat to immigration detention	7	Bridging visa	9
Arrived by plane on tourist visa	4	Protection visa	4
Arrived by plane on visitor visa	1	Refugee/SHP visa	3
Arrived by plane on business visa	1	Permanent resident	1
Arrived by plane on SHP/Refugee visa	3	Unknown	2
Arrived by plane—partner or prospective marriage visas	2		
Arrived by plane (unknown)	1		

Participants were selected if they had experiences of homelessness or had been at risk of homelessness. In this way, the results from this sample cannot be considered typical of the experience of refugees arriving in Australia but can provide insights into the experiences of those who do experience homelessness at some point.

## 4.4 Summary

In conclusion, the study's research questions were addressed in three main ways. First, by examining primary data collected in the longitudinal *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* administered by bilingual assistants with refugees from different ethnicities, living with family or in group households with non-related persons. Three waves of this longitudinal study were completed; 53 people participated in the final wave of the survey. There was a higher rate of attrition from male respondents and respondents from an African heritage. Second, an additional cross-sectional survey, the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey*, was conducted to collect additional in-depth information about the housing pathways experienced by humanitarian entrants upon arrival in Australia. This survey was completed by 20 refugees who agreed to undertake interviews due to their experiences of homelessness or having been at risk of homelessness. Visa information for all but one of the respondents was documented. Seven respondents arrived by boat and spent some time in immigration detention, three arrived with SHP/Refugee visas and all others arrived by plane on a non-humanitarian visa—including Tourist or Business visas. At the time of the study, nine respondents held Bridging visas and four held Protection visas. Third, the study undertook transect walks with refugees to gain an insight from the refugees themselves of their lived experiences of housing. Results from the transect walks were presented largely in the our first report (Flatau et al. 2014).

The samples of the two surveys were distinct. The longitudinal component focused on offshore-processed refugees, while the cross-sectional survey interviewees comprised a variety of humanitarian entrant and asylum seeker groups who had experienced homelessness. As such, the cross-sectional survey cannot be considered an in-depth extension of the longitudinal component, but rather an accompanying investigation.

## 5 THE HOUSING JOURNEYS OF REFUGEES IN AUSTRALIA

### 5.1 Introduction

The first wave of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion in Australia Survey* was conducted in 2012 with key findings included in Flatau et al. (2014). Over the course of 2013 and 2014, data was collected for the second and third waves of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion in Australia Survey*.

This chapter presents key findings from our investigation of the longitudinal data, with an emphasis placed on mapping the housing journeys followed by refugees in Australia. The results should be read in light of the composition of the respondent group. At the time of completing the Wave 2 Survey, around 70 per cent of respondents held a Refugee visa or a Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) visa. In other words, they entered Australia having been processed and accepted offshore as fulfilling the requirements of the Refugee and SHP visa categories. A further 18.2 per cent were on Protection visa 866, a permanent visa which applies when the person in question is found to engage Australia's protection obligations.

### 5.2 Sociodemographic information

Of the original 85 respondents, 53 respondents completed all three waves of the Survey. We shall focus on this group in the analyses which follow. A full summary of results can be found in Table A1.

The split of the data by city of residence, gender, year of arrival and region of origin is as follows:

- City of residence: Perth (n=29) and Melbourne (n=24)
- Gender: Male (n=23) and Female (n=30)
- Year of arrival in Australia: Arrived in 2011 (n=14), arrived in the 2009–10 period (n=18), and arrived in 2008 or earlier (n=21)
- Region of origin: Middle East (n=27), South East Asia (n=16), and Africa (n=10).

There was a relatively even distribution of respondents from Perth and Melbourne in the sample and, within each city, a relatively even spread of respondents from different countries of origin. Two-fifths (39.6%) of the respondents (who completed all waves) had been in Australia from 2008 or earlier, an increase from the 28.3 per cent who indicated the same time of entry to Australia at Wave 1. Respondents were fairly uniformly distributed across the three-years of arrival categories used (2008 or earlier, 2009–10, 2011) in both cities, and for both men and women. However, only 7.4 per cent of Middle-Eastern respondents had been in Australia from 2008 or earlier. Conversely, no respondents from the South East Asian or African regions (see Table A1) were in the group who had only been here since 2011.

The sample contained more women than men with the representation of women in the sample being higher in Perth than in Melbourne. Unlike the first wave of results, the division of people from different regions of origin was more pronounced, with half (50.9%) being from the Middle East, and 30.2 per cent and 18.9 per cent being from South East Asian and African respondents, respectively. Generally speaking, Middle Eastern residents had spent the least amount of time in Australia.

#### 5.2.1 English proficiency

English language competency noticeably increased from Wave 1 to Wave 3, with more than half (57.6%) of the respondents to the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion in Australia Survey* reporting that they were able to speak English either 'well' or 'very well', or read and

write at the same level (50.9%). This finding supports previous findings: DIAC (2012), for example, found, when comparing humanitarian entrants who had resided in Australia for one to two years and those who had lived in Australia for four to five years, that a greater proportion of those who had lived here longer felt that they spoke English 'well' or 'very well'. Given the strong association in the literature between English proficiency and employment (DIAC 2012; Phillimore & Goodson 2006; Aspinall & Watters 2010), these results are very encouraging.

The breakdown by cohort of the various groups' English language proficiency is summarised in Table A2. Respondents living in Perth had a higher overall English proficiency, with 65.5 per cent of Perth residents indicating that they could speak English well or very well, and 45.8 per cent of Melbourne residents saying the same. This is also reflected in reading and writing skills, with 69.0 per cent of Perth residents being able to read and write English either well or very well, compared to only 29.2 per cent of Melbourne residents.

The self-reported speaking, reading, and writing English language capabilities of female respondents were significantly higher than male respondents, with 13.3 per cent of females being able to read or write English very well, compared to only 4.3 per cent of men.

Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program entrants of African descent had the highest level of English proficiency among respondents who completed all three waves of the longitudinal survey, with all respondents in this particular cohort indicating that they could speak English either well or very well, and 70 per cent indicating they could either read or write it well. In contrast, of the South East Asian cohort, 87.6 per cent indicated that they could not speak English well or speak it at all, with the same proportion responding in the same way to questions relating to reading and writing.

### **5.3 Education, employment, and income**

Over the 12 months prior to the third wave interview, 28.3 per cent of respondents to the longitudinal survey had completed some form of educational or training qualification. TAFE courses and English classes were the most common qualification sought. Of those respondents who completed a TAFE course, all were of Middle Eastern descent, with a total of 73.3 per cent of those who had completed a qualification identifying this as their region of origin. Encouragingly, 28.3 per cent were currently engaged in some form of education at the time of Wave 3, with the most common selection again being English classes. See Table A3, for more details.

At the time of the Wave 3 survey, half (51%) of the respondents had found some form of either full or part-time employment. This is a notable improvement on the DIAC (2012) results that suggested that only 39 per cent of those who had lived in Australia for four to five years were employed. Nevertheless, a significant proportion (27.5%) of respondents reported they were currently not in the labour force, that is, they were neither employed nor looking for work. Of those who were currently in some form of employment, the mean net monthly income was \$2199, a significant decrease from the mean income level at Wave 1 (\$2568). This reduction in income may be related to a variety of factors including changed labour market conditions.

A gender income gap is evident with male respondents earning \$2565 per month on average, \$900 more than female respondents. However, as in Wave 1, this largely reflects differential full-time employment rates with only 13.4 per cent of women in full-time work, as compared to 54.5 per cent of men. Respondents who entered Australia at an earlier time period had a higher mean monthly income, with those who entered the country in 2011 having a mean monthly income of \$1713, compared to \$2373 for those who had arrived in 2008 or earlier. Additionally, Middle Eastern respondents had a lower mean monthly income than other respondents from other regions of origin (\$1858), with the next highest income by region of origin being those of South East Asian origin, having a mean income of \$2575.

Receipt of income support payments were common among respondents, with payments being made to 54.7 per cent of the respondent group at Wave 3. As with our Wave 1 analysis, Newstart Allowance was the most common income support payment (54.6%), with parenting payments (25.9%) and family assistance (14.8%) also being common sources of income. Table 7 below summarises the various sources of government income received by respondents.

**Table 7: Forms of income indicated by respondents**

Do you receive ...	Yes	No
Newstart/unemployment benefits	53.6%	46.4%
Family assistance	14.8%	85.2%
Disability payments	3.7%	96.3%
Carer's payment/allowance	3.7%	96.3%
Parenting payment	25.9%	74.1%
Youth allowance	3.7%	96.3%
Age pension	3.7%	96.3%
Special benefit	0.0%	100.0%

## 5.4 Housing pathways

### 5.4.1 Early housing experiences in Australia

The Wave 2 survey included a section which asked about the first and second types of accommodation accessed following entry to Australia, the length of time spent in these accommodation positions, and the help required in finding this accommodation.

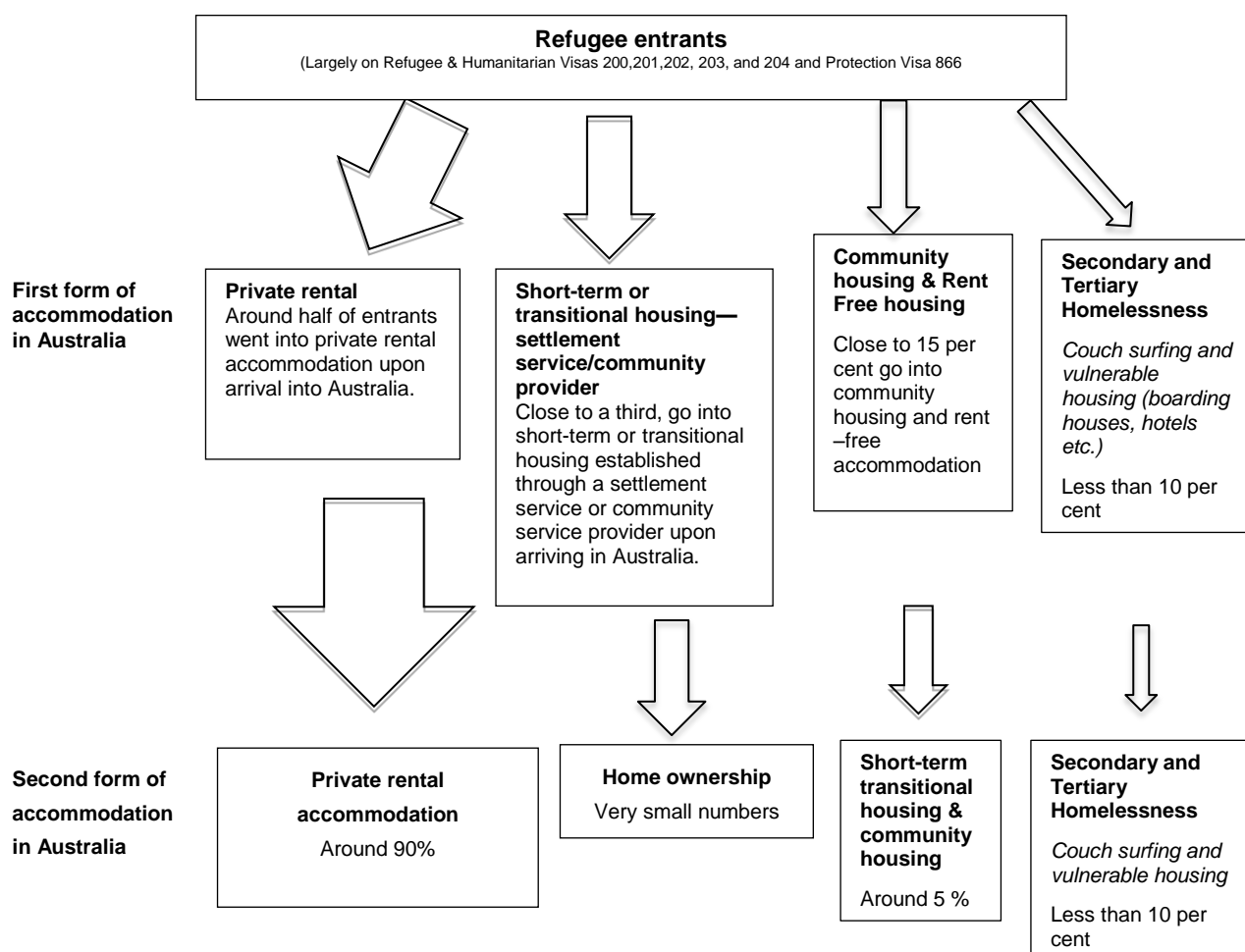
Close to half of respondents at the Wave 2 point (45.5%) reported private rental accommodation as the first type of accommodation accessed following entry into Australia (see Figure 6 below). A further 34.9 per cent reported entering into short-term or transitional housing with a settlement agency and a further 6.1 per cent entered into short-term or transitional housing with a community support provider. Other categories included community housing options (4.6%), rent-free accommodation (5.7%), staying with family and friends (2.3%), and boarding house, hostel and hotel and caravan park accommodation (2.2%). This data suggested that entry into Australia for offshore processed refugees was characterised largely by private rental accommodation or settlement agency-supported accommodation (or similar forms of accommodation). A very small minority entered Australia and found accommodation in precarious housing circumstances. No one in the longitudinal survey experienced primary homelessness on arrival in Australia.

As evident in Figure 6, respondents successfully progressed to private rental accommodation after initial support. There was a transition from vulnerable housing to private rental accommodation at the second accommodation point, with 90.1 per cent of respondents finding accommodation in the private rental market (and one respondent purchasing their own house). The proportion of respondents at the second accommodation point who were couch surfing or in boarding houses was around 5 per cent.

Interestingly, respondents who moved into short-term supported accommodation through settlement services and community services stayed in that accommodation for often very short periods before relocating into private rental accommodation (less than one month in their first residence in many cases). Conversely, the majority of those who moved straight into private rental accommodation spent more than a year in their first residence after arriving in Australia. In terms of the second accommodation point, around 60 per cent lived there for more than one year.

In regard to the support received in finding early accommodation, respondents stated that they relied primarily on both government and settlement caseworkers (64.6%), and family and friends (33.8%). No respondents indicated that they were able to find their first accommodation without help. With greater awareness of housing markets, around one-tenth (11.3%) indicated that they found their second accommodation with no help, and a further 8.1 per cent made use of a real estate agent. Furthermore, fewer respondents indicated that they were relying on support from caseworkers (30.6%), with support coming more through family and friends (46.8%). The self-sufficiency and social networks of the respondents implicit in these results suggested that entrants were generally transitioning well in the housing market.

**Figure 6: Pathways followed by refugee respondents to the AHURI longitudinal survey following arrival in Australia**



#### 5.4.2 Current housing situation

A flow chart depicting the most typical housing pathways of the respondents over the three waves is presented in Figure 7 below.

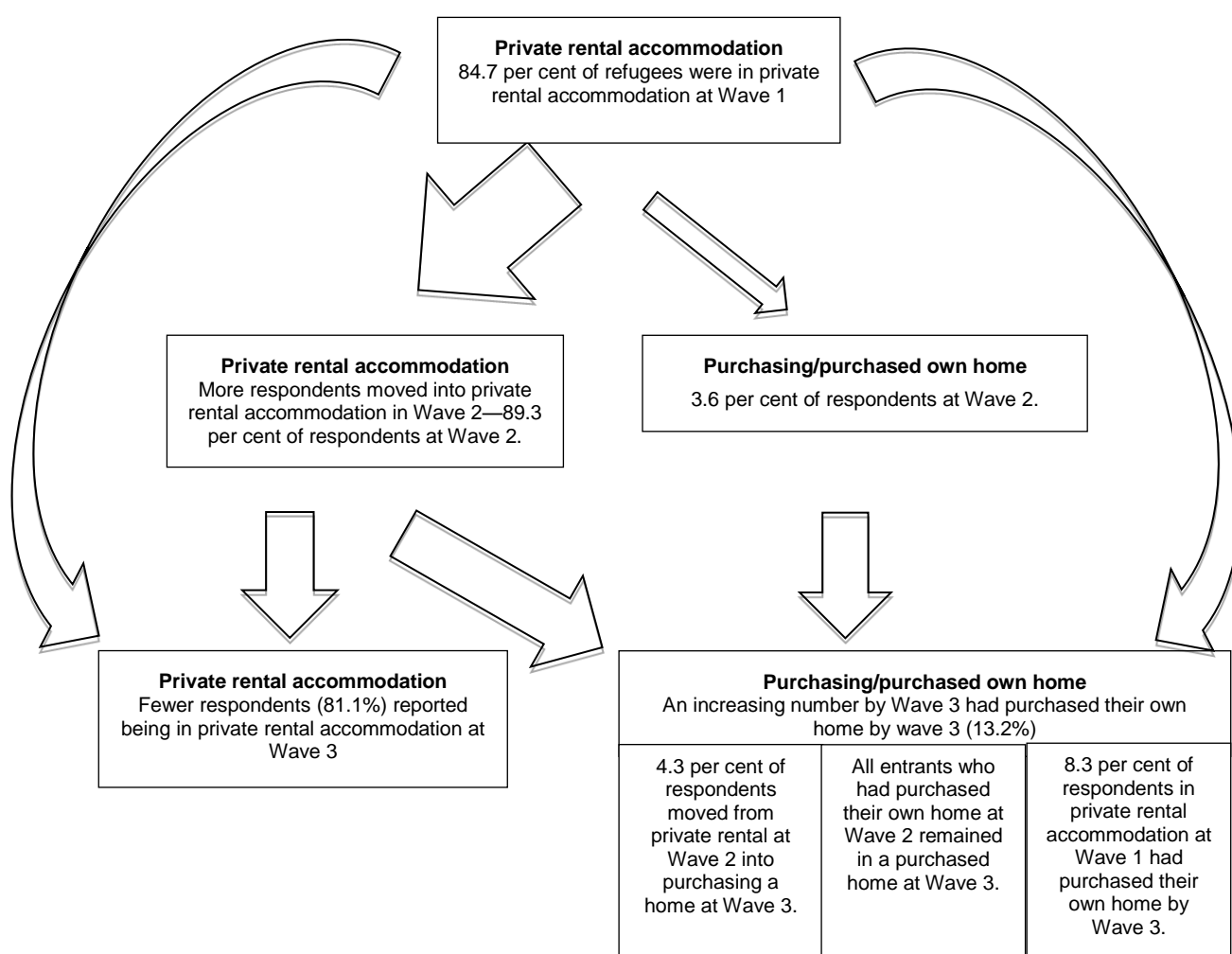
The majority of respondents (84.7%)<sup>7</sup> indicated that they were housed in private rental accommodation at Wave 1, which occurred at the time of many entrants' second accommodation transition in Australia. At Wave 2, we see that 89.3 per cent remained in private rental accommodation, while 3.6 per cent had purchased their own home. At Wave 3, all entrants who purchased their own home remained in it, while 4.3 per cent of those who

<sup>7</sup> Percentages in this section are calculated from the final Wave 3 sample of 53 respondents.

were in private rental accommodation at Wave 2 purchased their own home by Wave 3. This means that 8.3 per cent of respondents from private rental accommodation in Wave 1 had purchased a home by Wave 3, signifying a slow but definite tendency towards higher rates of home ownership. There was correspondingly a dip in the proportion of respondents in private rental accommodation by Wave 3 (81.1%).

Although there was no change in the proportion of respondents in Wave 3 who indicated that they were staying with family or friends because they had nowhere else to live (couch surfing), all those who were experiencing this form of homelessness at Wave 1 had transitioned into stable accommodation such as purchasing their own home, or renting in the private rental accommodation, by Wave 3.

**Figure 7: Housing pathways for refugees over three waves**



Of respondents who have been in Australia the longest (2008 or prior), nobody had experienced couch surfing, in comparison to 5.6 per cent of the 2009–10 group, and 7.1 per cent of the 2011 group. Furthermore, the South East Asian group appear to have had the most stable housing by Wave 3 with a quarter owning their own home, more than any other cohort.

The duration of housing spells increased noticeably over the three waves. The mean duration of a housing spell was 16.8 months at Wave 1, and increased by almost a whole year to 27.6 months by Wave 3 signifying increased stability in the housing market. Self-standing houses were the most common form of housing, with 62.3 per cent living in this type of dwelling by Wave 3 (Table A4).



#### 5.4.3 *Issues faced in accessing housing*

Respondents reported facing several issues when trying to access housing. One of the primary difficulties experienced was housing affordability problems. However, between Wave 2 and 3 fewer respondents indicated that they had trouble accessing housing due to the cost of rent being an issue: 30 per cent of Wave 2 respondents cited housing affordability problems compared to 15.8 per cent at Wave 3. Similar results were evident in terms of respondents who strongly felt that the cost of buying was preventing them from securing housing, with half of respondents indicating this at Wave 2, compared to 29.4 per cent at Wave 3.

There is a strong relationship between employment (and income) and housing affordability issues. Of those who were unemployed at the time of Wave 3, 55.5 per cent listed the cost of renting as the reason they could not find accommodation and 70 per cent indicated that the cost of buying was also an issue. (See Table A5 for details.) Interestingly, racial discrimination was proposed as one of the significant challenges facing respondents in accessing housing at Wave 3, with 23.5 per cent strongly agreeing with this statement. Only 4.4 per cent of Wave 1 respondents and 3.8 per cent of Wave 2 respondents named racial discrimination as a key barrier to housing. This may indicate that as refugees spend longer in Australia and are more exposed to the open market, they are more likely to encounter discrimination.

At Wave 3, the proportion of participants on a public housing and community waitlist was 30.2 per cent; a slight increase from Wave 1 (see Table A4). To elect and be subsequently placed on the waitlist implies low income and difficulties faced in accessing and meeting housing costs when in private rental accommodation. Respondents who had been living in Australia the longest were least likely to be on the waitlist with only 9.5 per cent of those who arrived in 2008 or prior reporting that they were on the waitlist. South East Asian origin respondents were least likely to be on waitlists; only 6.3 per cent were on a public housing or community waitlist, compared to 44.4 per cent of Middle Eastern respondents, and 30.0 per cent of African respondents.

#### 5.4.4 *Support received*

The reliance of respondents on service providers for assistance in housing decreased over the period of the longitudinal survey. For example, 42 per cent of the respondents indicated that they received assistance previously for housing, whereas between Wave 1 and Wave 2, only 16.9 per cent of participants relied on housing support, with 8.5 per cent indicating the same between Wave 2 and Wave 3.

#### 5.4.5 *Housing conditions and satisfaction of respondents*

Overall, a significant proportion of respondents (85.5%) were satisfied with the physical quality of their home at the time of Wave 3. Little variation was observed between the different stratified groups, with housing satisfaction in the 'physical quality' of the housing being high across all cohorts. High rates of satisfaction were also evident when respondents were asked about the 'size' of the house, with 78.0 per cent indicating that they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the size of their dwelling.

More variation was seen between respondents in respect to the 'standard' of housing achieved since arriving in Australia. There was a tendency for the earlier entrants who arrived by 2008 to report higher levels of satisfaction with the standard of the housing, with three-quarters of this group indicating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the standard of housing since arriving in Australia. As a point of contrast, 71.6 per cent of entrants from the 2009–10 group, and 53.9 per cent of entrants from the 2011 group indicated the same levels of satisfaction with the standard of housing. As was observed in the first wave of results, respondents from the South East Asian region had higher overall satisfaction with the standard of housing than respondents from Middle Eastern or African regions, with all South East Asian

respondents who answered the question agreeing that they were satisfied with the standard of housing experienced since moving to Australia. See Table A6 for more details.

## **5.5 Neighbourhood and social inclusion**

The final section of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion in Australia Survey* consisted of a set of questions that inquired about the levels of integration that the respondents had reached within their own community, and Australian society and culture in general.

### **5.5.1 Connections to community**

Approximately half of respondents (51%) expressed that they felt a part of their local neighbourhood. Of respondents who had been in Australia the longest (2008 or earlier), a significantly higher proportion agreed that they felt this sense of belonging (70.0%), compared to respondents who had been in the country from 2009–10 (41.2%) or from 2011 (33.3%). This was also reflected in the results for respondents from the South East Asian region, with nobody from this cohort indicating not feeling a part of their local community. There was also a higher tendency for male respondents to feel included in their neighbourhood (61.9%), in comparison to female respondents (42.9%).

The proportion of respondents who indicated that they felt like they were a part of mainstream Australian social and cultural life (48.8%) did not change from Wave 1. Respondents from different regions of origins reported quite different experiences, with 40.0 per cent of the African sub-group reporting that they had not integrated into mainstream Australian social and cultural life at all. This starkly contrasts with the results of the South East Asian group. Table A7 provides more detail on integration into local neighbourhoods and mainstream society.

The social networks of respondents within their neighbourhoods remained steady, as 53.8 per cent of respondents disclosed that they maintained a network of friends who they could rely on for help. Again, it was apparent that respondents who had lived in Australia the longest had formed the strongest social networks with 70.0 per cent of respondents who entered Australia in 2008 or earlier having some form of social network, compared to 42.8 per cent of respondents who entered in 2011 or thereafter. Social connections formed by Middle Eastern respondents appeared to be the weakest, with 74 per cent of Middle Eastern respondents either not knowing people in their neighbourhood, or did and would not consider them as a part of their social circle. See Table A8 for more detail on neighbourhood-level social networks.

More than three-quarters of respondents (76.9%) had established a network of friends from their own ethnic community (Table A9). An analysis by region of origin showed that the social networks formed by the Middle Eastern respondents within their own ethnic group, similar to the networks formed within their local neighbourhood, were significantly weaker than their South East Asian or African counterparts. While neither of the latter two groups expressed not mixing with members of their ethnic community, 22.2 per cent of the Middle Eastern group were not interacting, with only 18.5 per cent reporting that they had a strong network of friends.

### **5.5.2 Discrimination**

The proportion of respondents who indicated that they experienced discrimination in their neighbourhood did not improve from Wave 1. Although no respondents stated that they had endured a lot of discrimination, there was an increase in the number of respondents who faced some discrimination (17.3%), and a corresponding decrease in no discrimination experienced (44.2%). Women suffered a significantly higher level of discrimination in their neighbourhood than men, with 43.3 per cent reporting they experienced some discrimination, compared to 18.1 per cent of men. Respondents from the African region experienced the highest level of discrimination in their neighbourhood, half of this subgroup claimed that they had experienced some discrimination. South East Asian respondents reported the least amount of discrimination, with only minor discrimination being encountered and 87.5 per cent of participants not experiencing any discrimination.

### 5.5.3 *Feeling of safety*

The majority of respondents felt safe at home during the day and night. However, there was variation between the various groups on this question. Only half of the African respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe at home during the day, compared to 84.0 per cent of the Middle Eastern group and 81.3 per cent of the South East Asian group. Overall, female respondents felt significantly less safe and secure in their home compared to males, with the proportion of females who did not feel safe at home alone after dark standing at 46.7 per cent compared to 13.6 per cent for men. As with the results for daytime sense of safety, the proportion of African participants who did not feel safe home alone after dark (60.0%) was far greater than that for those from the Middle Eastern or South East Asian regions.

Overall feelings of safety experienced by the respondents within their neighbourhoods were noticeably higher at Wave 3 than Wave 1; 78.4 per cent of respondents indicated that they felt safe walking alone during the day (Table A12). African respondents again tended to have the lowest feelings of safety, with 44.4 per cent agreeing that they felt safe walking around their suburbs during the day. This was compared to 80.8 per cent of Middle Eastern respondents and 93.8 per cent of South East Asian respondents.

Almost one-third of the respondents (30.7%) expressed that they were able to walk in their suburb at night time while feeling safe; an increase from Wave 1 (Table A12). Female respondents were more likely to have feelings of low security and safety, with three-fifths indicating that they did not feel safe in this situation compared to two-fifths of men (40.9%). Of the different regions of origin, South East Asian respondents appeared to have experienced the highest levels of safety (50.1%), compared with only 26.9 per cent of Middle Eastern respondents and 10.0 per cent of South East Asian respondents—neither of the subsequent groups strongly agreed that they felt safe in this situation.

The level of safety experienced by respondents on public transport remained fairly stable over the time during which the study was completed, with 67.3 per cent agreeing that they felt safe using this mode of transport in Wave 3 (Table A13). The findings demonstrated that public transport was safer for Melbourne commuters with 79.7 per cent of Melbourne respondents agreeing that they felt safe on public transport, compared to 55.2 per cent of respondents from Perth.

### 5.5.4 *Trust*

Levels of trust on the part of respondents did not vary significantly from those evident at Wave 1 (see Table A14 for more details). Doctors and hospitals were identified as being most trusted, with 70.6 per cent of respondents agreeing that these professions and groups could be trusted. In contrast, trust for 'most people' was quite low, with only 21.2 per cent of respondents agreeing that they could trust most people. Trust in real estate agents was similarly quite low in comparison to other trust domains (36.0%); however, this marked an improvement from Wave 1.

Trust was quite low among respondents from an African origin, especially in comparison to outcomes evident for other groups. For example, only 22.2 per cent of African origin respondents indicated that they did not believe that police could be trusted. In contrast, trust in police was reported by 73.1 per cent of Middle Eastern participants and 75.1 per cent of South East Asian participants. In all cases, South East Asian respondents showed to be the most trusting cohort.

As was seen in the first wave of results, respondents from Melbourne typically invested higher levels of trust in the different professions. For example, 7.1 per cent of Perth respondents indicated that they were able to trust in 'most people', compared to 37.5 per cent of Melbourne-based respondents.

## 5.6 Summary

Over the course of 2012 to 2014, three waves of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion in Australia Survey* were administered. Of the 85 respondents who completed Wave 1, 53 completed all three waves. These 53 interviewees were the central focus of the analyses conducted in this report. The 53 respondents included 23 men and 30 women, 27 from the Middle East, 16 from South East Asia and 10 from Africa. Fourteen arrived in 2011, 18 arrived in 2009–10 and 21 arrived in 2008 or earlier.

English language skills are considered an essential contributor to successful integration in Australia. It is, therefore, of interest to note that English proficiency improved notably from Wave 1, with more than half of the respondents being able to speak English either 'well' or 'very well' at the third wave of data collection. This finding supports the view that English language competency improves over time. At Wave 3, 28 per cent of respondents were currently engaged in some form of education, most commonly English classes.

The results also reflected significant improvement in employment outcomes, with half of the sample reporting they had procured some form of full or part-time employment. However, we also note that a significant proportion (27.5%) were out of the labour force, which implied that they were neither working nor looking for work. As this figure hardly decreased from Wave 1, it suggests that a group of humanitarian entrants remain blocked from economic participation in the early years of resettlement.

Of the Wave 1 participants, 91 per cent held humanitarian visa status. Forty-six per cent of all entrants entered into private rentals as their first accommodation, while 35 per cent entered into short-term or transitional housing. The remaining participants entered secondary or tertiary homelessness. All respondents initially avoided primary homelessness. From Waves 1 to 3, a slow but definite trend emerged towards permanent housing, as 13.2 per cent of respondents purchased a home by Wave 3. The vast majority of entrants (81.1%) were in private rental housing at Wave 3. Altogether, close to 95 per cent of the respondents who completed all three waves of the survey were in private rental accommodation or home ownership by the time of the third interview. While the proportion of participants who experienced secondary homelessness did not decrease from Waves 1 to 3, the individuals who experienced it did change. All respondents who withstood secondary homelessness at Wave 1 transitioned into private rental accommodation or purchased their own home by Wave 3. This demonstrated an improvement in the stability of housing experienced by most entrants, although it is perhaps a worrying sign for those who experienced homelessness only in the later Waves.

The number of respondents who relied on caseworker support or other support services decreased over time. However, affordability of suitable housing remained a problem. The proportion of individuals on public housing and community waitlists increased slightly from Wave 1 to 3. Close to a third of respondents residing in private rental accommodation wished to make the switch to public housing indicating high levels of housing affordability problems.

Interestingly, racial discrimination became an increasingly pertinent adversity faced by respondents over time. This might imply that as humanitarian entrants spend longer in Australia and income and housing issues become less overwhelming, other issues such as racial discrimination become more noticeable. Our results suggested that there was a far lower experience of racial discrimination and harassment in Australia than in the UK.

## 6 HOMELESSNESS AND REFUGEES

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the findings of the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey*. This cross-sectional survey was completed with refugees experiencing homelessness or who were at risk of homelessness. Participants were interviewed about their experiences of housing and homelessness since their arrival in Australia. These participants were sourced from various homelessness and asylum seeker services in Perth and Melbourne. Responses from 20 refugees, 10 from Melbourne and 10 from Perth, were collected.

Results were examined for the whole cohort of 20 respondents, as well as in the following groups:

- City: Perth (n=10) and Melbourne (n=10)
- Gender: female (n=4) and male (n=15)
- Length of residence in Australia: less than two years (n=6), between two and four years (n=9), more than four years (n=4)
- Region of birth: Middle East (n=8), Asia (n=4), Africa (n=6)

### 6.2 Sociodemographic information

Nineteen of the 20 respondents gave their age in the survey. Of these, the average age was 35 years, with a range from 22 to 51 years. The oldest cohort was those who have been in Australia for four to six years, with an average age of 44.5 years. The youngest group was those from Middle Eastern countries with an average age of 29 years. (See Table A15 for a breakdown of age and other demographic information by cohort.) The survey sample was 75 per cent male and 20 per cent female, with the remaining respondent declining to name a gender. The very small sample size (20), and specifically the small number of women surveyed (4) means that comparisons between the genders can only really be made on a descriptive basis and cannot be generalised to the larger population.

The majority of respondents (40%) originated from the two Middle Eastern countries Iran and Afghanistan, with half from each country. The African countries represented were Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Guinea, and the Asian countries were Malaysia, India and Pakistan. There were 13 different ancestral groups among the 20 survey respondents, and 12 different languages as listed in the *Australian Standard Classification of Languages*, second edition (ABS 2011c). Over half (55%) of the respondents identified as Muslim, and a further 30 per cent identified as Christian. The remaining three people consisted of a Buddhist, a Sikh, and one who identified as not having a religion.

By design, exactly half the respondents lived in Melbourne and the other half in Perth. The representation of women was higher in the Perth group (30%), as opposed to the Melbourne group which was 10 per cent female.

The respondents in this survey all arrived between the years 2001 and 2014, and the surveys were conducted in October to December 2014. Most respondents (45%) had been in the country for two to four years (arrived in 2011 or 2012), followed by 30 per cent who had been in Australia for fewer than two years (arrived 2013 or 2014). The remaining four respondents had lived in Australia for more than four years, with one respondent declining to answer this question.

Participants from Asia had on average spent the least amount of time in Australia. All Asian participants had been in Australia for fewer than four years and 75 per cent had lived here for fewer than two years. The respondents originating from Africa had spent the longest time in Australia, with half of them residing in Australia for more than four years.

The group of respondents to the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* had similar demographics to the respondents to the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion in Australia Survey*. The only major difference was the gender balance; there were slightly more women than men in the longitudinal survey, while almost all of the respondents in this group were male.

### 6.2.1 *English proficiency*

Most of the respondents (80%) reported they could speak English either 'well' or 'very well', and the same number said they could read and write English 'well' or 'very well'. However, while 55 per cent of respondents could speak English 'very well', only 20 per cent could read and write English 'very well' and one person disclosed they could not read and write English at all. The distribution of English proficiency across the different cohorts is shown in Table A16.

The length of time spent living in Australia did not appear to have an effect on English proficiency. This is in contrast to the findings of our longitudinal survey and the 2011 findings from DIAC, which found that a greater proportion of refugees who had lived in Australia for four to five years felt they spoke English 'well' or 'very well' (56%) than those who had resided in Australia for only one to two years (40%). However, as the respondents in our study had not managed to find employment or stable long-term housing, it is perhaps not surprising their English had not improved during their time in Australia.

Men reported a greater ability to speak, read and write English compared to women—10 out of 15 said they could speak English 'very well', compared to one out of four women. Respondents who originated from Asia had the highest levels of English proficiency, with every one of them reporting they could read, write and speak English 'well' or 'very well'. People from African countries had the most difficulty with English with only one out of six reporting they could speak English 'very well' and none saying they could read and write English 'very well'.

Because every female in the sample was of African origin, these two factors are interrelated—the lack of English proficiency among women could be explained by the lack of English proficiency among those from Africa, or vice versa. Similarly, every Asian respondent was male and resided in Melbourne, so these factors are also interrelated.

## 6.3 **Education and employment**

### 6.3.1 *Education*

Half of the respondents accomplished at least a year 12 level of education, and of these, half had completed tertiary education (TAFE or similar, or university). This supported the DIAC (2012) results which stated that only 25 per cent of Refugee and Humanitarian entrants arrived with tertiary or trade qualifications. Our findings were significantly lower than those found by Forrest and Hermes (2012), who presented that 46 per cent of refugees held tertiary qualifications (33%) or a trade (13%). The most common highest level of education achieved by the present sample was incomplete high school, to which 40 per cent responded. Previous literature suggested that humanitarian entrants who settle in a host country with little or no education do not pursue further study (DIAC 2012). This is a concerning sign for the 40 per cent who arrived with incomplete high school.

The respondents who had completed tertiary education originated from Middle Eastern and Asian countries. Every respondent who completed tertiary education was male, but so was every respondent who listed 'incomplete high school' as their highest level of education.

### 6.3.2 *Employment*

Participants were asked whether they had been employed before moving to Australia, and 14 of them (70% of the sample) said that they had. This exceeds the results from Forrest and Hermes (2012) which posited that 43 per cent of refugees were employed or owned their own business prior to migration. It is also higher than the Australian 2011 Census figure of 61 per

cent of the Australian over-15 population (ABS 2012a). More males were employed than females (see Table A17).

The rate of employment of the respondents at the time of the survey was significantly lower than the national average—only four of the respondents (20%) reported having a job at the time the survey was conducted. All of these respondents previously had a job before moving to Australia, were male, and had been living in Australia for fewer than four years.

DIAC (2012) also suggested that only 19 per cent of humanitarian entrants who had been in Australia for between one and two years were employed. Our results would seem to support these findings. However, DIAC (2012) found that 39 per cent of those who had been living in Australia for four to five years were employed. Our results are only half of this. The longitudinal group also had a much higher rate of employment (51%) than this sample. This may be due to the sampling method employed: eligible refugee participants were selected specifically because of their experiences of homelessness or being at risk of homelessness. This could suggest that they were the least successful of refugees to arrive in Australia, and so in this light, a lower employment record is unsurprising. Another reason for this low employment rate is the visa situation of the respondents in this sample; many of them were not permitted to work.

Of the four employed, only one reported dissatisfaction with his current job. The reasons given were that the occupation did not pay enough and did not involve the same level of responsibility the respondent enjoyed when living overseas.

## **6.4 Housing**

### **6.4.1 *Current housing situation***

The majority of respondents (18 of the 20 in the sample) were not housed in long-term stable accommodation at the time of the survey. Most of these (15 respondents) were staying in transitional housing provided by a support service, including crisis accommodation and refuges. Two respondents were temporarily staying with relatives, and one was sleeping rough (see Table A18). This is in contrast to the longitudinal survey respondents; 81 per cent resided in private rental accommodation and a further 13 per cent had purchased their own home.

The two respondents that had long-term accommodation at the time of the survey were staying in private rental and community housing. Both interviewees had been living in Australia for a significant period of time (more than two years), were males living in Perth and were of African origin.

About one-third (35%) of the respondents were on a waiting list for public or community housing. All were living in Perth and had been in Australia for at least two years. A greater proportion of women than men were placed on waiting lists.

### **6.4.2 *Accommodation calendars***

The survey included an 'accommodation calendar', which recorded the main residency of respondents roughly every fortnight from the point of arrival to Australia and just prior to completing the survey. This calendar included tenancy options such as home ownership, private rentals and social housing, as well as precarious living situations such as living on the streets, living in rooming houses, hostels and motels and living in accommodation provided for the homeless such as men's 'shelters' or women's refuges. The calendar also included residence in institutional settings such as a prison or hospital. Short stays, such as a couple of nights in hospital, were not reflected in the calendar. Accommodation calendars were recorded for 19 of the 20 respondents, from the time they arrived in Australia (after leaving detention if relevant), or from 2009 for those who arrived before 2009.

Most of the respondents (65%) had spent some time living in private rental housing since arriving in Australia. Over half (55%) had lived with friends or relatives temporarily because

they had nowhere else to stay, and 45 per cent had lived in transitional housing provided by a CAS provider, settlement service or the Specialist Transitional Asylum Seeking Housing Program. A high proportion (80%) of respondents had experienced either primary or secondary homelessness during their time in Australia. A complete breakdown of the types of accommodation that respondents lived in is provided in Tables A19, A20 and A21.

Of note is the finding that a greater proportion of women than men had support from family—three out of four women had lived with relatives when they had nowhere else to stay, while the same is true of only two of fifteen men. Where women had experienced this support, men had frequently stayed in boarding houses, hostels, crisis accommodation or slept rough. Forty per cent of men had stayed in at least one of these, whereas no women had.

On average, the respondents had spent 45 per cent of their time since arriving in Australia living in private rental accommodation, 15 per cent in crisis accommodation and refuges, and 7.4 per cent in the Specialist Transitional Asylum Seeking Housing Program. A further 6.8 per cent of their time was spent in public housing, and 6.5 per cent in both public housing and living with friends or family.

The mean length of time in each place of residence was 9 months. Respondents spent an average of 2.7 months at a time living with family or friends, 5.4 months at a time sleeping rough, 9 months in public or community housing, 1.6 years at a time in crisis accommodation, and 1.6 years at a time in private rentals. Respondents from Africa spent a year on average in each place they lived in, which is considerably longer than those from the Middle East (7.6 months at a time, on average) and from Asia (6.5 months at a time). An exception to this generalisation is that the average length of each stint in crisis accommodation for people from the Middle East was about five times longer than those from Africa (2.5 years as opposed to 6 months).

#### 6.4.3 *Cluster analysis*

While the sample size was too small to perform any formal statistical analysis, the respondents can be clustered into two distinct groups. The first group is less stable: they had moved around more and spent shorter periods of time in each housing situation. This group consists of three-quarters of the sample (N=14). The second group had more stable accommodation situations (N=5). A summary of these two groups is provided in Table A22. Both groups had the same average age, but discrepancies existed in other demographic aspects, seen in Table 8 below.



**Table 8: Cluster demographics**

			<b>Cluster 1 (less stable housing)</b>	<b>Cluster 2 (more stable housing)</b>
City	Perth	(%)	42.9	80.0
	Melbourne	(%)	57.1	20.0
Length of residency in Australia	Less than 2 years	(%)	42.9	0.0
	2 to 4 years	(%)	42.9	60.0
	More than 4 years	(%)	14.3	40.0
Gender	Female	(%)	14.3	40.0
	Male	(%)	85.7	60.0
Region of origin	Middle East	(%)	61.5	0.0
	Asia	(%)	23.1	20.0
	Africa	(%)	15.4	80.0
Age	Mean	(years)	34.7	35.4

The representation of women was higher in the second group, which encompassed 40 per cent of respondents, compared with 14 per cent of the first group. Most respondents (61.5%) in the first group (less stable housing) were from the Middle East, while most (80%) in the second group were from Africa. The first group had spent less time in Australia—nearly half (42.9%) had been here for less than two years, while all of those in the second group had been in the country for more than two years. This reflected the high rate of movement between accommodation types in the initial stages of refugees' accommodation pathways; most take some time to gain long-term accommodation.

The first group had, on average, spent seven months in each type of accommodation before moving on. All but two (85.6%) of the respondents in this group had experienced primary homelessness (rough sleeping) or secondary homelessness, such as couch-surfing, boarding houses and crisis accommodation. These situations made up 45 per cent of this group's collective time in Australia. Three people in this group had experienced primary homelessness. Just over half (57%) of the respondents lived in private rental accommodation at some point during their stay in Australia. However, little time was spent in this type of accommodation; each stay lasted 9 months on average, and private rental housing made up 25 per cent of this group's time in Australia.

In contrast, the second group spent 16 months at a time in each type of accommodation. None experienced primary homelessness, while 60 per cent experienced secondary homelessness (couch-surfing), which made up 6 per cent of this group's time in Australia. Every respondent in this group lived in private rental accommodation, which accounted for 77 per cent of their time.

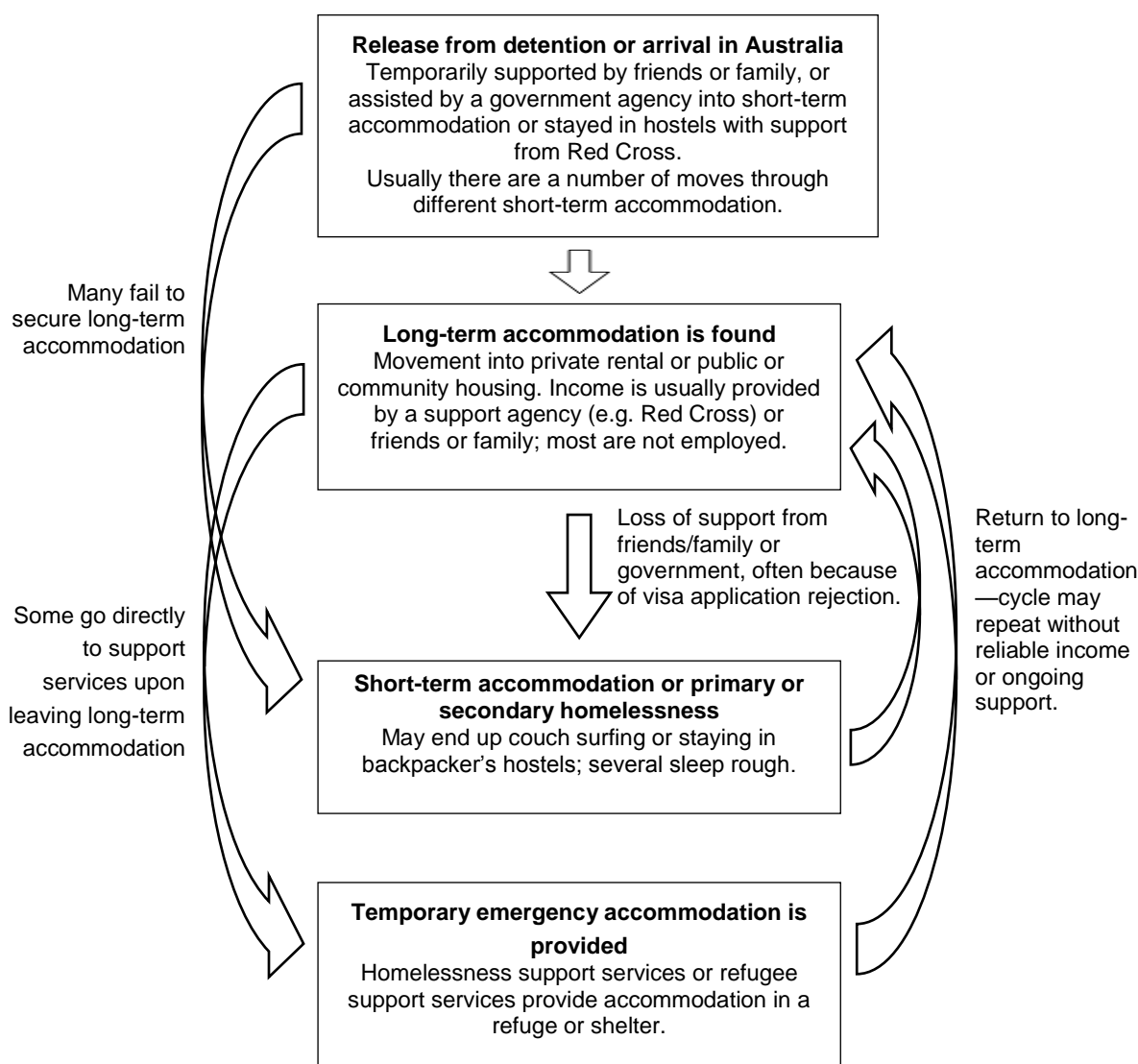
The typical housing pathway of Cluster 2 (refugees with a more stable housing pathway who had not experienced primary homelessness) is shown in Figure 8 below. The pathway of this cluster supported the previous literature (Beer & Foley 2003; DIAC 2012; Forrest & Hermes 2012; Tually et al. 2012) which suggested that refugees enter the private rental market then move in and out of more transitional forms of accommodation until they enter the longer term private rental market. Those in Cluster 1 followed a similar pathway; however, they spent little

or no time in the long-term accommodation stage, and had moved around temporary accommodation and homelessness much more frequently.

Of the five refugees in the second, more stable group, three were processed offshore and given Refugee or Special Humanitarian Program visas. Another arrived with a Partner visa, and achieved permanent residency status soon afterwards. These four all began life in Australia living in long-term private rental accommodation, unlike most of the rest of the sample. The final respondent in this group arrived with a Tourist visa, then secured a Bridging visa E and managed to live in long-term private rental housing with help from his stepfather.

All respondents who currently held a Protection visa and all but one of those who held Bridging visas A, B, C, D or E, fell in Cluster 1; that is, they had less stable housing pathways.

**Figure 8: A typical housing pathway of a refugee in this sample**



This is aligned with the typical housing pathways of Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visa holders and Temporary Protection visa holders as described by Beer and Foley (2003). In these pathways, Refugee and SHP visa holders tend to move quickly into housing with government assistance or family support on arrival. Temporary Protection visa holders tend to move around short-term accommodation before finding private rental accommodation. However, Beer and Foley's (2003) pathways do not reflect the exit from long-term accommodation that refugees in both groups experienced, and the time spent in primary or

secondary homelessness. This is likely to be particular to the respondents in this sample who were selected due to their experiences of homelessness.

#### 6.4.4 *Housing pathways*

Examination of the calendar results reveals patterns in the accommodation histories of the respondents. The patterns, as outlined above in Figure 8, are as follows:

- In the first stage, Refugee or SHP entrants arrive in Australia and move into private rental accommodation supported by sponsors or the government; asylum seekers are released from detention and are supported by the Red Cross in terms of temporary accommodation, such as a boarding house or hostel, or with family or friends; those on visitor, tourist or business visas arrive by plane and are supported by friends and family in Australia with accommodation and apply to be granted refugee status and are placed on a Bridging visa.
- Longer term accommodation is found, usually private rental accommodation. Funding to gain accommodation comes from support agencies such as the Red Cross, or from family or friends in Australia or overseas. In one case the refugee relied on his own savings.
- In several cases refugees remain living with family or friends rather than finding their own long-term accommodation. Reasons for this include a lack of financial support, unemployment, racism and discrimination, mental and physical health issues and lower rates of English proficiency.
- Some event occurs which leads to refugees losing their stable accommodation. For several respondents, this was their application for a Protection visa being refused, which means that the Red Cross no longer supplied them with income. In other cases, the friend or family member supporting the refugee was no longer willing or able to continue support—for instance, a relationship ended, a family member had their visa refused and was sent back overseas, or a friend no longer had room in their house. Other reasons for losing stable accommodation included the refugee's savings running out or their rent increasing beyond the point they could afford. Most respondents were unemployed, and this lack of a steady source of income means it is much harder for them to quickly find another stable place to live.
- The refugee no longer has a stable housing option, so they enter primary or secondary homelessness. For most, this means staying with family or friends temporarily (couch-surfing) but those without this option usually end up sleeping rough, or in one case, living temporarily in a backpackers' hostel.
- Support services such as crisis accommodation providers, men's supported accommodation services, women's refuges or refugee settlement services help the refugee acquire some kind of temporary or transitional accommodation. Some of the refugees were able to get support immediately after exiting stable accommodation, avoiding any homelessness, but others spend up to a month rough sleeping before contacting these services. At the time of the survey, several respondents had not entered any transitional housing, and were still staying with friends or family. It is expected that respondents will seek long-term accommodation again when they are able.

This pathway is very different to the typical housing pathway for the longitudinal survey respondents (see Figure 7 above). The longitudinal survey group examined in the previous chapter had spent almost all of their time in private rental housing or home ownership, but the respondents in this group endured much more volatile pathways. This is at least partly due to a lack of finances; this group suffered a much lower employment rate and many were not eligible for government assistance.

There is a real danger of this pattern repeating itself. Even if a refugee managed to find long-term accommodation again, there is still the risk that they could lose it in much the same way they did before.

This occurred to one of the survey respondents who firstly stayed briefly with her sister upon arrival in Australia, then found her own place with the help of family members and stayed there for nearly three years, before the rent increased beyond what she could afford. She was then forced to live in a precarious situation:

Stayed with cousin in one room with six people [Respondent and five of her children]. There was fighting all the time because it was overcrowded. When there were arguments, my daughters would often leave and sleep in the car park at a park in Balga. During this time I cried every day.

This continued until she secured another private rental unit, with help from friends. The rent increased after two years, and she again ended up living with family.

Of the 19 respondents with calendars recorded, 13 followed a similar pattern. Of those who didn't, three had been living in Australia for less than a year and had not located stable accommodation, but rather had been staying in various hostels, transitional housing, couch surfing and some rough sleeping.

One respondent moved to Australia in 2001 and stayed with friends before finding a job with accommodation. He had spent the last six years (since 2009) alternating between rough sleeping and having a job with accommodation provided (e.g. working on a farm), for roughly six months at a time. He found this situation extremely distressing:

It's hard, I have no family here. I don't have home. It's very hard the situation I live, I can't have timetable. In morning I wake up and try to find food, somewhere to wash. At night I try to find somewhere to sleep. I don't have house to look for job. I got no one to care for me if I've got a headache or broken leg.

Another respondent had been privately renting a house for at least four years before going to prison for three months, then spending the next year in post-correctional facility accommodation before living in community housing for nine months. He likened the community housing to his experience in prison:

Not really enjoying living there—it's a roof over your head but it's like living in jail. If someone wants to visit they have to call, and have to be with you all the time.

The remaining respondent had spent his whole time in Australia (nearly six years) living in private and public housing rental accommodation. This appeared stable compared to the rest of the sample, but the respondent moved house several times within this period, and the quality of his housing and treatment by his landlords had been sub-standard:

Current property—they are not looking after people they are looking after business. If something damaged landlord not respond ... I haven't been able to work—I need back and knee surgery. I am on Newstart Allowance—my future is not certain because I am not working. If you have more than five children they [real estate agents] reject [rental] applications. It's not good here [Western Australia] for a big family. Many people leave WA.

This respondent was in a vulnerable housing situation, and was not sure whether he would have stable housing in the future:

Community services will update us if public housing becomes available, but have been on list for four or five years and single mum or single father always come before you. I feel sleeping on the street could be the future. Am prepared to go to another state. We are forgotten people. That's why so many go to another state that is better than this one.

Nineteen of the 20 respondents to the survey provided their accommodation histories. These pathways are shown in Table 9 below.

## Impact of visa category

At the time of survey, of the sample of 19, nine held Bridging visas, four held Protection visa 866, three held a Refugee or Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) visa, one was a permanent resident and two did not state a visa category. However, this did not necessarily correspond to their arrival status. Of the nine with Bridging visas, three arrived by boat and spent time in immigration detention and five arrived by plane on Tourist or Business visas, and one arrived on a prospective marriage visa. While three of the four on Protection Visa 866 arrived by boat to immigration detention, one arrived by plane. All those who had a refugee or SHP visa at the time of the survey arrived with it.

To receive support from the Red Cross through the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS), humanitarian entrants must have a bridging visa and have been waiting for a decision about whether their Protection visa application is accepted for at least six months. Alternatively, those with Bridging visas who are vulnerable due to exceptional circumstances may qualify for the Community Assistance Support (CAS) scheme. Both programs provide financial assistance and other support services. However, should the humanitarian entrant's Protection visa application be rejected, they cannot continue to access either ASAS or CAS.

Five of the entrants on Bridging visas received financial assistance from the Red Cross, presumably through either ASAS or CAS for some time, before this support was withdrawn when their application for a Protection visa was rejected. Two others received financial assistance from a family member or friend for some time before this was withdrawn, and another exhausted all of their savings.

Those on a Protection visa 866 all received Red Cross support for a period of time upon arrival. This support may have been withdrawn when they were granted Protection visas, as they should then have become eligible for other government support services.

The majority of people surveyed (14) accessed support from not-for-profit agencies at some point in their housing journey in Australia. Two were provided housing from refugee support services, and 12 were accommodated by homelessness services. It is very clear that the support provided by not-for-profit agencies was essential in the refugees' resettlement experiences.

### 6.4.5 *Experiences with homelessness*

Rough sleeping was experienced by five of the 19 respondents with a recorded accommodation history.

Three of these respondents were living in share houses which became unavailable to them for various reasons, and they ended up sleeping rough as they had nowhere else to go. They didn't have friends or family to turn to, and limited English proficiency made it difficult to find out how to access support services in Australia, as indicated by one respondent:

I was absolutely disgusted by the whole thing. I've never slept outside or in the parks in my life before. Main reasons were we didn't know the language well, we didn't know where the Afghan community was or didn't have friends in the community. We didn't know Australian rules and regulations as well.

Another participant was expecting to be picked up from the airport on his arrival and ended up sleeping on the streets after he wasn't collected:

Nowhere to go in new country. Not collected at airport as promised.

Nights I spent on street were scary. My bag was stolen with all my money.

Refugees in this sample often ended up relying on homelessness support services, or friends and family, as most of them were not eligible for government assistance and not permitted to

work. This lack of support often came as a shock to refugees, who were expecting that they would experience a more stable and safer life in Australia:

This was really, really no good. I wasn't happy. I came to Australia in that time I was thinking I have a house and nice car in Afghanistan but I came to Australia for a better life and a safer life. It wasn't safe, sleeping rough. I used to sleep on the grass in the park. I had no-one to support me and I didn't know Perth.

Respondents experienced violence and discrimination while sleeping rough:

I was in the wrong place at the wrong time and two were fighting and I walked past and they started on me and stabbed me. It was a small wound but it got my liver—I went to hospital. In Afghanistan you know your enemy, it's the Taliban, but here you don't.

People call me things and I just walk on past because in my heart I know I'm not terrorist. Because if I stand up for myself I might end up in fight, in prison or hospital, so sometimes it is good to walk away. In this country I get bashed a lot because people see I'm Muslim.

Secondary homelessness was experienced by most of the survey respondents. This included staying in backpackers' hostels or temporarily with friends or family because they had no other accommodation option. Backpackers' hostels were particularly undesirable places to live:

Every night there were people smoking marijuana and getting drunk. I had never seen anything like this in my country!

Hostel in Tasmania—it was ok but not very well, it was noisy with different kind of people every day. It was not clean and not nice.

I didn't like it, but had no choice. There was a lack of security, it was impossible to sleep; people were partying and drinking all night and couples having sex in the room.

Staying with friends or family, if possible, was usually a better option, but houses were often overcrowded which led to stressful circumstances:

It's very stressful here. The house has small rooms and I am living with my daughter, her husband and two children and I have three of my children with me. It is not culturally appropriate for me to stay with my daughter and her husband and he can say I should not stay in the house.

Horrible. Children kept screaming. Two adults and five children in home. Two stay in bed. I had a young daughter (under two) who would wake up at 5 or 6. At first I didn't realise it was early for them. Then I realised and couldn't take her to play in the living room, had to keep her in bed. Her sleeping pattern changed and she lost routine. The lady I was staying with husband was away while I was there. When he come back I had to leave.

Living with three of my [dependent] children as I don't have anywhere else to live. I have so much stress. I am not well because I don't have my own house.

When refugees found themselves in these homeless situations, they usually had no option but to turn to homelessness support services. However, these services only provide short-term or transitional accommodation, and unless the refugee becomes eligible to work or receive government assistance, they must again rely on support from friends or family, or return to homelessness after leaving these services.

#### 6.4.6 *Moving house*

On average, respondents moved 4.1 times since arriving in Australia. Every respondent moved at least twice and some reported moving up to 10 times. Interestingly, those who had been in Australia for two to four years moved on average 4.7 times, compared with 3.3 for those who

had been living in Australia for more than four years. Respondents from the Middle East moved the highest number of times; 5.0 times on average over their time in Australia. Middle Eastern respondents made up 67 per cent of the group that had been in Australia, so these two factors could be interrelated.

#### *6.4.7 Size and quality of housing*

Throughout their time living in residential accommodation in Australia, respondents lived in much larger households with more people per room, than the national average. The 2011 Census revealed that the average household size in Greater Melbourne and Greater Perth, as well as Australia-wide, was 2.6 persons. The average number of persons per bedroom for each also had an equal value of 1.1 persons (ABS 2012a, 2012b & 2012c). The average household size recorded in this survey was 5.33 persons per household, more than double the national average, and the number of people living in each household ranged from 1 to 11. Although the number of people per bedroom was 1.36 (slightly higher than the national average), half of the households had at least one bedroom per person. Perth-based respondents had a higher average household size at 6.18 persons per household, compared to 4.62 in Melbourne. Melbourne-based respondents had close to the national average of persons per bedroom, at 1.08, compared with Perth's 1.77. Women tended to live in larger households than men, with an average of 7.92 persons per household compared with 3.72 for men.

When asked about their satisfaction with the quality of their current living place, respondents generally reported a high level of satisfaction. Of the 11 respondents that provided an answer to this question, 7 reported that they were 'very satisfied' and 2 reported being 'satisfied'. Both of the respondents that reported being unsatisfied with the quality of their current living place were of African origin. Perth respondents were less happy with their dwelling than Melbourne respondents—all of the Melbourne respondents reported being 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied'.

### Box 1: Transect Walk

*Kings Park 10:30AM Sunday, 25 January 2015*

Malik and Kaawa [pseudonyms] are two Afghani men in their early 30s. They met originally in Indonesia, before travelling (separately) to Australia by boat. They spent at least some of their time in detention together before exiting to different states. Malik was transferred to Tasmania, and then to Adelaide, while Kaawa was transferred to Canberra, before moving around eventually to Adelaide. They reunited in Adelaide and have spent most of their time in Perth together.

Malik and Kaawa have followed the general housing pathway: first, living in what should have been long-term accommodation, but being forced to leave when government financial support ended. After this they experienced several weeks of rough sleeping before entering a homelessness support service and accommodation. Kaawa has since moved into a shared rental property, but wants to find a place where he can live with Malik—presumably until they can be joined by their families. Kaawa has a wife and children overseas that he supports, and Malik has a wife overseas that he supports.

Malik explains that when they were told that they were required to leave the house in Wellard, he explained to the caseworker that 'I don't have house, I don't have room to live' and the caseworker replied 'that is your choice; you have to find accommodation for yourself'.

As they had nowhere to go, they spent the first three or four days in the park outside the house where they were living, before spending time near Garden City and eventually coming to Kings Park. Seeing people use the barbecues drew Kaawa and Malik to Kings Park, where they stayed for three weeks. During this period, their personal safety was under threat—they explained that their money and phones were stolen. In response to the robbery, they bought a car to use as a safe for their luggage. They were also stalked by an unknown person. For a time Kaawa worried that he was 'mentally sick' and was just imagining the stalker, but Malik heard it as well.

Their hygiene suffered as they were unable to bathe for the three weeks—except for when they got caught by the sprinklers. The mental health of the two men has also suffered. Kaawa gets 'seriously stressed' when he thinks about his experience of being homeless. Neither had experienced that before. Indeed, Malik was a contractor in Kabul, who worked with Americans. He was well off in his country, but came to Australia to live in a safer environment.

It was only when they went to collect their Centrelink payments that they found out about the homelessness service. Before that, they thought it was just for backpackers. Malik and Kaawa were accommodated in a Perth homelessness service for over two years. Malik explained that they 'have really been happy' at Uniting Care West.

Their situation is now much better: they have a roof to live under and jobs. The significance of the relief from unemployment is evident: 'and they're working—that is the main thing'.

Kaawa is living in a rental share. It's overcrowded, with seven people in three bedrooms. Malik remains in supported accommodation, but the two of them are looking for a place to live together. Housing is still their biggest issue. Malik explains that the biggest help that they can get is for someone to help them find affordable accommodation.



**Table 9: Individual pathways of refugees**

	Arrival status	Year housing pathway began	Housing pathway						Current visa status	
1	Arrived by boat, spent 3–5 months in immigration detention	2012	Hotel funded by Red Cross, then staying with family	➡	Various public and private rental housing, income provided by Red Cross	➡	Red Cross money cut off due to RRT visa rejection	➡	Various short-term accommodation supported by homelessness services	Bridging Visa E
2	Arrived by plane on tourist visa	2014	Staying in various hostels supported by homelessness services							Bridging Visa E
3	Arrived by plane on tourist visa	2014	Refuge run by church, then share houses with support from homelessness services							
4	Arrived by plane on tourist visa	2011	Lived at friend's house—four people in one room	➡	Found own private rental place, financial support from stepfather	➡	Loss of income—stepfather refused visa and sent back to India.	➡	Housing supplied by homelessness service	Bridging Visa E
5	Arrived by plane on business visa	2014	Lived temporarily in mosque then friend's house	➡	Private rental with income provided by Red Cross	➡	Red Cross money cut off due to RRT visa rejection		Motel provided by ASRC, then share house	Bridging Visa E
6	Arrived by boat, spent 6–11 months in immigration detention	2012			Private rentals with income provided by Red Cross	➡	Red Cross money cut off due to RRT visa rejection	➡	Housing supplied by homelessness service	Bridging Visa E
8	Arrived by plane on visitor visa	2014	Sleeping in airport and on streets on arrival, then emergency accommodation with Red Cross.	➡	Stayed with a friend, with financial assistance from Red Cross	➡	Red Cross money cut off	➡	Housing supplied by homelessness service	Bridging Visa E

	Arrival status	Year housing pathway began	Housing pathway					Current visa status		
9	Arrived by plane on Prospective Marriage Visa	2012	Lived at fiancée's house	➡	Moved to private rental - paying rent out of own savings	➡	Savings ran out and visa application rejected so no benefits available	➡	Housing supplied by homelessness service	Bridging Visa A, B, C or D
10	Arrived by boat, spent 3–5 months in immigration detention	2013	Lived at friend's house	➡	Private rental with income provided by Red Cross	➡	Red Cross money cut off due to RRT visa rejection	➡	Housing supplied by homelessness service	Bridging Visa E
11	Arrived by plane on tourist visa	2013	Holidaying & visiting girlfriend's family in Australia	➡	Private rental with financial assistance from girlfriend	➡	Girlfriend stopped helping out, stayed in backpackers	➡	Crisis accommodation provided by homelessness service	Bridging Visa, unsure which
12	Arrived by boat, spent 6–11 months in immigration detention	2011	Stayed in backpacker's hostels with support from Red Cross	➡	Private rentals	➡	No room in accommodation anymore because housemate brought family to Australia to live with him. Slept in car briefly	➡	Housing supplied by homelessness service	Protection Visa 866
13	Arrived by boat, spent 6–11 months in immigration detention	2012	Stayed in backpacker's hostels with support from Red Cross, then Centrelink	➡	Living in share house with a friend	➡	Had to move out of share house (why?). Started sleeping rough in Kings Park	➡	Housing supplied by homelessness service	Protection Visa 866
14	Arrived by boat, spent 6–11 months in immigration detention	2011	Stayed in backpacker's hostels with support from CAS program	➡	Living in share houses with friends while searching for a job	➡	Had to move out of share house because friend lost financial support. Started sleeping rough in Kings Park	➡	Housing supplied by homelessness service	Protection Visa 866

	Arrival status	Year housing pathway began	Housing pathway					Current visa status		
15	Arrived by plane with Refugee or SHP visa	2001	Lived with a friend (sponsor)	➡	Moved around various private rentals and workplace accommodation	➡	Went to prison for three months, then lived in Outcare housing for ex-prisoners	➡	Community housing	Refugee or SHP Visa
16	Arrived by plane with Refugee or SHP visa	2009			Various private rental housing					Refugee or SHP Visa
17	Arrived by boat, spent less than three months in immigration detention, issued with Temporary Protection Visa	2001			Alternating between sleeping rough and getting accommodation while in and from jobs					
18	Arrived by plane	2011			Private rental housing with assistance from case worker	➡	Private rental being renovated, asked to leave. Living with friends and relatives temporarily	➡	Crisis accommodation provided by refugee support service	Protection Visa 866
19	Arrived by plane with partner visa	2011			Moved in with husband who was already living in Australia	➡	Divorce with husband, living with various friends and family			Permanent resident
20	Arrived by plane with Refugee or SHP visa	2009	Lived with sister (sponsor)	➡	Found own private rental with help from family	➡	Rent increased so had to move out	➡	Living with family again, <b>cycle repeated once</b>	Refugee or SHP Visa

#### 6.4.8 *Access to housing*

Sixteen of the respondents (80% of the sample) reported that they had significant trouble finding a new place to live, while the remaining four declined to answer the question. All reported that a reason why they struggled to find a new tenancy was that accommodation was too expensive. Housing affordability is a well-documented barrier to refugee integration (see Fozdar & Hartley 2013). Unemployment was another common reason, with thirteen (81%) of the sixteen respondents reporting this as an influential factor. Four people had difficulty obtaining accommodation due to their lack of rental history, and three experienced discrimination in their search for accommodation.

### 6.5 **Summary**

Responses from 20 refugees, 10 from Melbourne and 10 from Perth, were collected. The respondents originated from various African, Asian and Middle Eastern countries, and most were male. The majority reported that they could speak English well. Most were unemployed at the time of the survey but had been employed before coming to Australia, and half of the respondents had achieved at least a year 12 level of education. At the time of survey, most respondents were living in transitional housing provided by a support service, including crisis accommodation and refuges. Only one respondent was renting privately, although 65 per cent of respondents had lived in a private rental house at some time since their arrival in Australia. A high proportion of respondents had experienced either primary or secondary homelessness in Australia, which was to be expected as respondents were selected for participation based on their experience of homelessness or susceptibility to homelessness.

Housing pathways were very similar for many of the respondents. After arriving in Australia or leaving detention, respondents typically moved through various short-term types of accommodation before securing longer term accommodation. Most then exited this accommodation after an average of 16 months; usually because their support from agencies or friends and family ceased. Homelessness was then experienced for some time before support agencies provided emergency accommodation. Nearly all of the respondents indicated they had had trouble finding a new place to live because accommodation was too expensive, and most indicated that unemployment also made it problematic for them to obtain housing. The pressure of high housing costs was also confirmed by the significant proportion of respondents currently on a public or community housing waitlist.

Two general 'clusters' of housing experiences emerged. The first experienced more frequent changes in housing, and most experienced primary homelessness (rough sleeping) or secondary homelessness which accounted for 45 per cent of their time in Australia. This group contained all those who held a Protection Visa and all but one who held a Bridging Visa. The second group experienced a more stable housing pathway. Of this group, three held Refugee or Special Humanitarian Program visas, another arrived with a Partner Visa. A fifth participant arrived with a Tourist visa, received a Bridging Visa E and was then able to find long-term private rental housing with the help of his stepfather. None experienced primary homelessness. This is aligned with the typical housing pathways of Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program Visa holders and Temporary Protection Visa holders as described by Beer and Foley (2003). However, Beer and Foley's (2003) pathways do not reflect the exit from long-term accommodation that most refugees in both groups had experienced, and the time spent in primary or secondary homelessness. This is likely to be particular to the respondents in this sample, who were selected due to their experiences of homelessness.

## 7 SUMMARY AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The present three-year research study has furthered our understanding of the housing, neighbourhood and social inclusion experiences of refugees who settle in Australia. The existing literature highlighted the fact that successful resettlement and integration of refugees into a host nation is dependent upon access to appropriate, affordable and secure housing, and establishing a place to call 'home'.

This report, the second in the series, has shown that the refugees interviewed as part of the study generally followed a positive housing trajectory in the years immediately following settlement in Australia. Our findings revealed that the majority of respondents resided in private rental accommodation, housing affordability issues reduced over time, a small minority progressed into home ownership and most felt satisfied with the housing they occupied. Self-reported English language proficiency was found to improve over the course of data collection as was employment outcomes.

Nevertheless, refugees continue to confront significant barriers to full participation in the housing market and across social, cultural and economic domains in Australia. There is a sizeable group where housing affordability problems remain with one-fifth seeking housing cost relief by placing themselves on the public and community housing waitlists. Employment levels, despite rising solidly following resettlement, remain below those observed in the Australian population. Lack of employment generally prevents movement into home ownership and locks some refugees into chronic housing affordability complications.

Disturbingly, refugees experienced higher levels of discrimination in the housing market and elsewhere rather than lower rates over time. Additionally, in our intensive study on refugees who had experienced homelessness in one form or another and had received support from homelessness support agencies, there were alarming housing journeys followed by asylum seekers once temporary support from the Red Cross or elsewhere ended.

Our study employed a mixed methods approach to gather evidence on the housing journeys followed by refugees, which included a three-wave longitudinal survey, a cross-sectional survey for refugees who had at some point experienced some level of homelessness, focus group discussions and transect walks. Evidence from focus group discussions and transect walks were a prominent feature of the first publication from the study. The analysis of the three-wave longitudinal study and the cross-sectional homelessness survey were the focus of this second publication.

The baseline of the longitudinal *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* was completed with 85 refugee settlers participating in Perth and Melbourne, 53 of whom completed all three waves. The survey focused on gaining longitudinal information about refugees' sociodemographics, employment and education, housing pathways and social inclusion experiences. The survey was administered face-to-face by bilingual interviewers and collected quantitative as well as qualitative data. The cross-sectional *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* aimed to further our understanding of homelessness experienced by refugees. It was completed by 20 refugees who were selected on the basis that they had experienced homelessness or had been at risk of homelessness.

Australia's resettlement policy for asylum seekers and refugees is complex and multi-faceted, which has a significant impact on the accommodation and employment situation of refugees and asylum seekers; as the type of support that people receive is dependent upon their class of visa in addition to other factors. While some are eligible for HSS and other mainstream support, some visa categories are excluded. The Red Cross is contracted by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection to provide some additional support to recent refugees waiting for a decision regarding their Protection visa application, or to those who are particularly vulnerable (e.g., unaccompanied minors). However, this support ends when the

protection status of a settler is decided. This can result in some remaining unable to work or access benefits, without any support provided. The support of other not-for-profit organisations, particularly refugee support networks and homelessness services, is thus essential.

A review of the available literature surrounding refugee housing and homelessness in Australia and comparable international counterparts, Canada and the UK, revealed a consistent set of challenges faced by refugees. In all countries reviewed, refugees are recognised as a group that is particularly susceptible to housing instability and homelessness. The systems of support offered by these countries are argued to be complex, inadequate and in some cases, non-existent. Indeed, the lack of support to navigate a new country and its institutions is a significant exacerbating factor to the already overwhelming issues faced by refugees, including a shortage of affordable housing, poor labour market outcomes, and racial discrimination.

In Australia and Canada the literature highlighted that high rental costs are a primary concern facing refugees. Literature from all countries pointed to the fact that the incomes of refugee households are often low, and unemployment rates are high. Refugee households often have low incomes for various reasons, including low levels of English proficiency, a lack of recognition of foreign qualifications and a lack of job experience within the country—all of which may result in refugee households being relegated to unskilled positions, and as a consequence, low income brackets and difficulty finding housing. Further, low levels of English proficiency, a lack of on-going support and discrimination by landlords (on the grounds of ethnic, racial or religious identity, refugee status, or on household size or income) were identified as significant barriers to accessing the housing market in all three countries.

The literature suggested that many refugees follow volatile housing pathways: they often start in long-term public or private accommodation but are forced to leave due to a halt in financial assistance. A period of various short-term accommodation options follows, which may include a period of homelessness. After this, refugees may find themselves working with homelessness shelters to acquire other public housing options. Housing is understood to be a cornerstone of successful integration and participation in an economy and a country. However, the literature examined here suggested that refugees and asylum seekers experience difficulties accessing both the labour and the housing markets.

In order to address the scarcity of Australian literature investigating the housing and integration experiences of refugees, over the course of 2012 to 2015, three waves of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion in Australia Survey* were administered. Of the 85 respondents who completed Wave 1, 53 completed all three waves of data collection. The responses provided by these 53 became the central focus of the analyses conducted. The 53 respondents included 23 men and 30 women, 27 from the Middle East, 16 from South East Asia and 10 from Africa. Fourteen arrived in 2011, 18 arrived in 2009–10 and 21 arrived in 2008 or earlier.

English language skills and employment are considered to be essential contributors of successful integration. Our results indicated improvement in English language proficiency from Wave 1 to 3, with more than half of the respondents being able to speak English either 'well' or 'very well' by the third year of the study. This may be due to the fact that living longer in a country allows more exposure to the mainstream language and provides more opportunities to improve language skills. The improvement to the English skills of the sample could also be attributed to the finding that of the 28 per cent of respondents engaged in some form of education at Wave 3, most were enrolled in English classes. Our results also reflected momentous advancements in employment outcomes, with half of the respondents having found some form of either full or part-time work. This is an improvement on previous studies (e.g. DIAC 2012). However, we also note that the proportion of respondents out of the labour force at Wave 3 (27.5%) had hardly decreased from Wave 1. This suggests that there is a sizeable group of refugees who are unemployed or who are unable to participate in the Australian economy on arrival, and who are blocked from accessing it in the future.

The housing pathways experienced by individuals seem to support previous findings in that private rental accommodation is the common outcome. Respondents to the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* either entered into private rental accommodation or short-term or transitional housing when they first arrived in Australia. None of the respondents to the survey experienced rough sleeping at any stage since arriving in Australia, although several experienced secondary homelessness or tertiary homelessness, particularly in the early years of resettlement. At the third year of the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey*, the majority of respondents (81.1%) resided in private rental accommodation, while 13.2 per cent had progressed into home ownership. These results demonstrated a clear trend towards sustainable permanent housing among refugees who enter Australia on Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program visas or who are assessed as refugees while in Australia. There were a small number of respondents at year three who experienced secondary homelessness. This suggests that some refugees experience a worsening housing journey over time rather than an improved trajectory.

Respondents reported facing a number of issues in trying to access housing with the primary issue cited being housing affordability problems. The number of refugee respondents to the *Refugees, Housing and Social Inclusion Survey* who indicated that they had trouble accessing housing due to the high cost of renting fell from 30 per cent at Wave 2 to 15.8 per cent at Wave 3. Similar results were evident in terms of respondents who strongly felt that the cost of buying prevented them from securing housing, with half of respondents indicating this at Wave 2, compared to 29.4 per cent at Wave 3. There is a strong relationship between employment (and consequently income) and housing affordability issues. Of those who were unemployed at the time of the third interview, 55.5 per cent thought the cost of renting was an issue for them in finding accommodation and 70 per cent indicated that the cost of buying was also an issue.

Applying for, and subsequently being placed on public and community housing waitlists, is indicative of low income and difficulties in accessing and meeting private rental accommodation costs. At the third year, the proportion of respondents placed on public housing and community housing waitlists was 30.2 per cent; a slight increase from Wave 1. This result implied that a significant number of refugees continue to experience housing affordability problems for a period following entry. Encouragingly, respondents who had been living in Australia the longest were least likely to remain on housing waitlists with only 9.5 per cent of those who arrived in 2008 or prior reporting that they were on the waitlist.

The reliance of refugees on accommodation service providers decreased significantly over time. For example, 42 per cent of the respondents indicated that they received assistance for housing following their arrival in Australia. By the second year of the survey, only 16.9 per cent of participants relied on housing agencies and this decreased further to 8.5 per cent by the third. A substantial proportion of respondents (85.5%) were satisfied with the physical quality of their home at the time of the third interview. There was a tendency for the earlier entrants who arrived at latest in 2008 to report higher levels of satisfaction, with three-quarters of this group indicating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the standard of housing since their arrival. By comparison, 71.6 per cent of entrants from the 2009–2010 group, and 53.9 per cent of entrants from the 2011 group indicated the same levels of satisfaction.

Given that the refugees who participated in the longitudinal survey were able to avoid primary homelessness suggests strong links to their ethnic communities, including friends and families. Results from focus groups, discussed in the previous report, suggested that secondary homelessness may be preferable to residing in rooming or boarding houses because individuals can remain proximal to their language and culture of heritage. In response to neighbourhood and social inclusion questions, half of the respondents indicated that they felt part of their local community. Seventy per cent of respondents who had been in Australia for the longest (arriving in 2008 or earlier) felt a sense of belonging, compared to only 33 per cent of those who arrived in 2011. However, the proportion of respondents who disclosed that they

felt included in mainstream Australian society did not improve from Wave 1, and an increasing proportion of respondents felt they had experienced some discrimination. Respondents who had been living in Australia for the longest appeared to have been affected by discrimination the most. This may be because they have been exposed to prejudice more due to living here longer.

Responses to the social inclusion questions showed that experiences differed significantly by region of origin. Forty per cent of respondents who originated from Africa felt that they had not integrated into mainstream Australian culture at all, while all respondents from South East Asia felt a sense of belonging. African respondents experienced the worst level of discrimination, which may explain why this group recorded substantially lower trust than entrants from the Middle East or South East Asia. Overall, the levels of trust did not change significantly for any group since Wave 1, and over half indicated that they could not trust most people. This suggests that while refugees have improved their English skills, economic participation and housing experiences, achieving social integration and establishing meaningful connections with the broader community remains a significant challenge.

In order to further our understanding of refugees' experiences of homelessness, the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* was devised. A cross-sectional group of 20 refugees who were receiving support from homelessness services were interviewed. This group, having been selected due to their experiences with homelessness or risk of homelessness, represented the 'worse-case' outcomes for refugees in Australia and as such do not reflect typical housing pathways experienced. This aspect of the study aimed to address the gaps in our knowledge resulting from the scant literature in this area.

Responses from 20 refugees, 10 from Melbourne and 10 from Perth, were collected. The respondents originated from various African, Asian and Middle Eastern countries, and most were male. The majority reported that they could speak English well. Most were unemployed at the time of the survey, but had been employed before coming to Australia, and half of the respondents had achieved at least a year 12 level of education. Most respondents were living in transitional housing provided by a support service, including crisis accommodation and refuges, at the time of the survey. Only one respondent was renting privately, although 65 per cent of respondents had lived in a private rental house at some time since they arrived in Australia. After arriving in Australia or leaving detention, respondents to the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey*, all of whom were interviewed because they had experienced homelessness or had been at risk of homelessness, generally moved through various short-term types of accommodation before securing longer term accommodation. However, many experienced homelessness when financial assistance and support ended.

Two general 'clusters' of housing experiences were evident among respondents to the *Refugees and Homelessness Survey*. In the first cluster were those who experienced relatively frequent changes in housing, and experienced primary homelessness (rough sleeping) or secondary homelessness accounting, on average, for 45 per cent of their time in Australia. This group contained all those who held a Protection Visa and all but one who held a Bridging Visa. Respondents experienced violence and discrimination while sleeping rough.

The second group of respondents experienced a more stable housing pathway. Of this group, three held Refugee or Special Humanitarian Program visas, another arrived with a Partner Visa and the fifth arrived with a Tourist visa, received a Bridging Visa E and was then able to obtain long-term private rental housing with the assistance of his stepfather. While none of the participants in this second cluster experienced primary homelessness, they did encounter other forms of homelessness, including emergency supported accommodation and couch surfing.

Nearly all of the respondents (from both groups) disclosed that they had trouble finding a new place to live because accommodation was too expensive. Most indicated that unemployment also made it arduous for them to acquire housing. The pressure of high housing costs was also



evident in the significant proportion of those interviewed who were placed on a public or community housing waitlist.

The findings from the two surveys confirm that housing affordability problems continue to be a major issue for many refugees. In addition, many recent refugees experience difficulty finding full-time employment, although some have 'filled this gap' with education, often to improve their English proficiency. Many of those interviewed in the longitudinal survey navigated fairly stable housing pathways; most resided in private accommodation and avoided primary homelessness (rough sleeping). However, few recent refugees experienced a volatile housing pathway and bouts of rough sleeping, often after financial assistance was cut off or when Protection visa applications were rejected.

A principal policy implication from our findings is that the available housing and other social services provided to recent refugees who entered Australia through the Australian Government's offshore refugee and humanitarian program appear, in the main, to be successful in helping refugees secure accommodation. The majority of refugees who entered Australia under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program and participated in this research sustained long-term tenancies in the private rental market. Some progressed into home ownership after initial periods of support. Offshore-processed refugee and humanitarian entrants generally negotiated their own way through the Australian housing market following solid foundational support during the resettlement phase.

Nevertheless, there was a considerable minority of offshore-processed refugees (around one-quarter) who experienced serious housing affordability problems following the settlement period including those on public and community housing waitlists. Risk assessments should be undertaken during the initial support period following entry to Australia to identify those refugees considered to be at high risk of experiencing housing stress. Following these assessments, a specific case managed program should be implemented to ease at-risk refugees' transition into the Australian housing and employment market.

Australia's housing affordability challenges, encountered by low-income earners, including refugees, require a concerted policy response. Reducing housing affordability challenges remains of critical importance to refugees as well as other low-income groups. Given that Australia's public and community housing stock is currently limited and unable to meet the needs of many disadvantaged and low-income groups, the option of improving recent refugees' access to already limited social housing opportunities is unlikely to be successful in the current housing climate. When refugees experience similar difficulties faced by other vulnerable societal groups such as mental health issues, family violence and homelessness, then it is critical that they are informed of the available support services and priority housing access options. The evidence in this report also points to the specific challenge faced by refugees in terms of racial discrimination and access to housing. It is recommended that refugees be assisted throughout the process of support utilisation with a multi-agency and collaborative approach to offer recent refugees more comprehensive and ongoing intensive support for those who need it in the immediate aftermath of resettlement.

In light of our findings and the apparent strong association between employment outcomes and accommodation affordability, emphasis must be placed on supporting newly settled refugees' transition into employment. In particular, recent refugees identified as at-risk of prolonged unemployment or who are experiencing difficulty negotiating the Australian job market should be assisted by relevant services in locating employment opportunities as well as applying for and maintaining employment.

The experiences of homeless refugees in our *Refugees and Homelessness Survey* pointed to insecure housing pathways, which were strongly influenced by restricted support upon entry into Australia or following exit from detention. The cessation of Red Cross financial support or informal assistance from friends and family resulted in immediate crisis and rough sleeping,

which led to direct emergency accommodation provision by homelessness services. The housing issues experienced by those refugees affected by homelessness were exacerbated by very poor employment outcomes and restricted access to jobs. This suggests an important area of future research. By including questions around refugee status in the AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services collection, a deeper understanding of the prevalence, structure and impact of homelessness among refugees may be forthcoming, as well as further insights gained about their transition into and out of homelessness, and the effectiveness of support provided.

Given the pivotal role of homelessness and other emergency services in helping refugees and asylum seekers source long and short-term and crisis accommodation, it must be considered whether these facilities are adequately resourced to manage the current accommodation demands. Essential resources include interpreters and other multicultural services as well as the provision of rental subsidies and financial support for refugees who are facing dire economic circumstances when Red Cross support and other forms of financial and social assistance end.

The results indicate improvements to English language proficiency among the refugees interviewed as part of the refugee longitudinal survey. However, less promising results were evident in terms of the discrimination experienced and connections and inclusion into mainstream Australia.

As a multicultural society, Australia should incorporate more active and supportive educational and promotional campaigns around refugees and asylum seekers to support integration and encourage both greater social links between individual refugees and other Australians, and as a means of reducing the impact of discrimination towards refugees. Educational campaigns aimed at Australians might also raise awareness of the plight of refugees and asylum seekers, encouraging integration and inclusion of recent refugees into Australian society. The findings from this research suggest that the prevalence and impact of racism worsened for refugees the longer they stayed in Australia rather than improved, perhaps because of wider exposure to Australian society. Our findings support the contention of Beer and Foley (2003, p.27) that 'discrimination appears to be a major impediment to successful movement through the housing market and this prejudice comes from neighbours, landlords, real estate agents and the general community' and the results of the Australian Red Cross (2013) Inaugural Vulnerability Report.

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## APPENDIX

Table A1: Sociodemographic information by cohort

		All respondents	City		Year of arrival			Gender		Region of origin		
			Perth	Melbourne	2008–prior	2009–10	2011	Male	Female	Middle East	South East Asia	Africa
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
City	Perth	54.7			52.4	61.1	50.0	43.5	63.3	55.6	56.3	50.0
	Melbourne	45.3			47.6	38.9	50.0	56.5	36.7	44.4	43.8	50.0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>			<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Year of arrival	2008 or prior	39.6	37.9	41.7				43.5	36.7	7.4	62.5	90.0
	2009–2010	34.0	37.9	29.2				26.1	40.0	40.7	37.5	10.0
	2011	26.4	24.1	29.2				30.4	23.3	51.9	0.0	0.0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>				<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Gender	Male	43.4	34.5	54.2	47.6	33.3	50.0			40.7	56.3	30.0
	Female	56.6	65.5	45.8	52.4	66.7	50.0			59.3	43.8	70.0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>			<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Region of origin	Middle East	50.9	51.7	50.0	9.5	61.1	100.0	47.8	53.3			
	South East Asia	30.2	31.0	29.2	47.6	33.3	0.0	39.1	23.3			
	Africa	18.9	17.2	20.8	42.9	5.6	0.0	13.0	23.3			
	<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>			

**Table A2: English proficiency by cohort**

		How well do you speak English?					How well do you read and write English?				
		Very well	Well	Not well	Not at all	<i>Total</i>	Very well	Well	Not well	Not at all	<i>Total</i>
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)		% (5)	% (6)	% (7)	% (8)	
City	All respondents	17.0	39.6	35.8	7.5	100.0	9.4	41.5	43.4	5.7	100.0
	Perth	13.8	51.7	31.0	3.4	100.0	13.8	55.2	27.6	3.4	100.0
	Melbourne	20.8	25.0	41.7	12.5	100.0	4.2	25.0	62.5	8.3	100.0
Year of arrival in Australia	2008 or prior	28.6	28.6	42.9	0.0	100.0	9.5	38.1	52.4	0.0	100.0
	2009–10	11.1	44.4	27.8	16.7	100.0	5.6	44.4	38.9	11.1	100.0
	2011	7.1	50.0	35.7	7.1	100.0	14.3	42.9	35.7	7.1	100.0
Gender	Female	20.0	46.7	26.7	6.7	100.0	13.3	50.0	30.0	6.7	100.0
	Male	13.0	30.4	47.8	8.7	100.0	4.3	30.4	60.9	4.3	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	11.1	55.6	22.2	11.1	100.0	14.8	51.9	25.9	7.4	100.0
	South East Asia	6.3	6.3	81.3	6.3	100.0	6.3	6.3	81.3	6.3	100.0
	Africa	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	70.0	30.0	0.0	100.0

**Table A3: Training and qualifications by cohort**

			All respondents		City		Year of arrival in Australia			Gender		Region of origin		
					Perth	Melbourne	2008 or prior	2009–10	2011	Male	Female	Middle East	South East Asia	Africa
Qualifications completed in the last 12 months														
TAFE/technical or business college	N	4	1	3	1	0	3	3	1	4	0	0		
Trade certificate	N	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0		
University/other higher education	N	2	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1		
English classes (i.e. at AMEP, TAFE, LLNP, or SEE)	N	4	3	1	0	2	2	1	3	3	1	0		
Other	N	3	1	2	0	2	1	1	2	3	0	0		

**Table A4: Current housing, dwelling type and public housing waitlist by cohort**

		All respondents	City		Year of arrival in Australia			Gender		Region of origin		
			Perth	Melbourne	2008 or prior	2009–10	2011	Male	Female	Middle East	South East Asia	Africa
<i>Current housing</i>												
Purchasing/purchased own home	%	13.2	17.2	8.3	14.3	16.7	7.1	17.4	10.0	7.4	25.0	10.0
Private rental	%	81.1	72.4	91.7	85.7	77.8	78.6	73.9	86.7	85.2	68.8	90.0
Staying temporarily with family/friends (as nowhere else to live)	%	3.8	6.9	0.0	0.0	5.6	7.1	8.7	0.0	3.7	6.3	0.0
Other	%	1.9	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0	3.3	3.7	0.0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Type of dwelling (%)</i>												
Self-standing house with garden	%	62.3	65.5	58.3	76.2	44.4	64.3	73.9	53.3	48.1	93.8	50.0
Terrace house/villa/unit	%	30.2	27.6	33.3	14.3	55.6	21.4	17.4	40.0	44.4	6.3	30.0
Flat in a low walk-up	%	7.5	6.9	8.3	9.5	0.0	14.3	8.7	6.7	7.4	0.0	20.0
<i>Total</i>	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Indicated currently on a public or community housing waitlist</i>												
Average people per household	No.	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.8	3.9	4.8	4.2	3.9	5.3	4.7
Average times moved in the last year	No.	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4
<i>Total</i>	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table A5: Difficulties faced when accessing housing by cohort**

Have the following been difficulties when trying to access housing?	All respondents	City		Time in Australia			Gender		Region of origin		
		Perth	Melbourne	2008 or prior	2009	2010	Male	Female	Middle East	South East Asia	Africa
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Cost of rent</i>											
Strongly disagree	26.3	25.0	27.3	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Disagree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	20.0	33.3	14.3	11.1	40.0	40.0
Neither agree nor disagree	10.5	0.0	18.2	12.5	16.7	0.0	0.0	28.6	0.0	20.0	20.0
Agree	47.4	50.0	45.5	50.0	50.0	40.0	41.7	57.1	66.7	40.0	20.0
Strongly agree	15.8	25.0	9.1	12.5	0.0	40.0	25.0	0.0	22.2	0.0	20.0
Unsure/Don't know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Cost of buying</i>											
Strongly disagree	5.9	0.0	9.1	0.0	14.3	0.0	10.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0
Disagree	5.9	0.0	9.1	0.0	0.0	33.3	10.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0
Neither agree nor disagree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Agree	47.1	50.0	45.5	57.1	57.1	0.0	40.0	57.1	14.3	100.0	40.0
Strongly agree	29.4	33.3	27.3	42.9	14.3	0.0	20.0	42.9	28.6	0.0	60.0
Unsure/Don't know	11.8	16.7	9.1	0.0	14.3	33.3	20.0	0.0	28.6	0.0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table A6: Satisfaction with standard of housing and size of dwelling by cohort**

All respondents	City		Year of arrival in Australia			Gender		Region of origin			
	Perth	Melbourne	2008 or prior	2009–10	2011	Male	Female	Middle East	South East Asia	Africa	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Physical quality of current home											
Very satisfied	9.6	10.7	8.3	5.0	11.1	14.3	13.0	6.9	14.8	0.0	10.0
Satisfied	76.9	78.6	75.0	85.0	72.2	71.4	78.3	75.9	70.4	100.0	60.0
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	5.8	7.1	4.2	5.0	0.0	14.3	4.3	6.9	7.4	0.0	10.0
Unsatisfied	5.8	3.6	8.3	5.0	11.1	0.0	4.3	6.9	7.4	0.0	10.0
Very unsatisfied	1.9	0.0	4.2	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.0	10.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Size of your dwelling											
Very satisfied	6.0	3.8	8.3	5.0	5.9	7.7	8.7	3.7	8.0	0.0	10.0
Satisfied	72.0	76.9	66.7	80.0	64.7	69.2	82.6	63.0	60.0	100.0	60.0
Neither satisfied or unsatisfied	10.0	3.8	16.7	10.0	17.6	0.0	4.3	14.8	16.0	0.0	10.0
Unsatisfied	10.0	11.5	8.3	5.0	11.8	15.4	0.0	18.5	12.0	0.0	20.0
Very unsatisfied	2.0	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	4.3	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Standard of housing since arriving in Australia											
Very satisfied	8.0	7.7	8.3	5.0	5.9	15.4	8.7	7.4	12.0	0.0	10.0
Satisfied	60.0	65.4	54.2	70.0	64.7	38.5	69.6	51.9	44.0	100.0	40.0
Neither satisfied or unsatisfied	12.0	15.4	8.3	5.0	5.9	30.8	8.7	14.8	24.0	0.0	0.0
Unsatisfied	14.0	7.7	20.8	15.0	11.8	15.4	8.7	18.5	16.0	0.0	30.0
Very unsatisfied	6.0	3.8	8.3	5.0	11.8	0.0	4.3	7.4	4.0	0.0	20.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table A7: Feelings of being part of neighbourhood and mainstream Australian society by cohort**

		I feel part of my local neighbourhood						I feel part of mainstream Australian social and cultural life					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)		% (6)	% (7)	% (8)	% (9)	% (10)	
All respondents		2.0	26.5	20.4	51.0	0.0	100.0	2.0	16.0	34.0	48.0	0.0	100.0
City	Perth	4.0	24.0	20.0	52.0	0.0	100.0	3.8	19.2	26.9	50.0	0.0	100.0
	Melbourne	0.0	29.2	20.8	50.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	12.5	41.7	45.8	0.0	100.0
Year of arrival in Australia	2008 or prior	5.0	10.0	15.0	70.0	0.0	100.0	5.0	15.0	45.0	35.0	0.0	100.0
	2009–10	0.0	29.4	29.4	41.2	0.0	100.0	0.0	16.7	27.8	55.6	0.0	100.0
	2011	0.0	50.0	16.7	33.3	0.0	100.0	0.0	16.7	25.0	58.3	0.0	100.0
Gender	Female	3.6	28.6	25.0	42.9	0.0	100.0	3.4	17.2	34.5	44.8	0.0	100.0
	Male	0.0	23.8	14.3	61.9	0.0	100.0	0.0	14.3	33.3	52.4	0.0	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	0.0	47.8	30.4	21.7	0.0	100.0	0.0	20.8	29.2	50.0	0.0	100.0
	South East Asia	0.0	0.0	12.5	87.5	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	56.3	43.8	0.0	100.0
	Africa	10.0	20.0	10.0	60.0	0.0	100.0	10.0	30.0	10.0	50.0	0.0	100.0



**Table A8: Social networks within a neighbourhood by cohort**

		What best describes your social networks within your local neighbourhood?				
		I have a strong network of friends and other people	I know one or two people who are my friends/I can ask for help	I know some people in my neighbourhood but would not call them friends or ask for help	I do not know people in my neighbourhood	<i>Total</i>
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	
	All respondents	28.8	25.0	21.2	25.0	100.0
City	Perth	25.0	17.9	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Melbourne	33.3	33.3	12.5	20.8	100.0
Year of arrival in Australia	2008 or prior	40.0	30.0	20.0	10.0	100.0
	2009–10	33.3	11.1	22.2	33.3	100.0
	2011	7.1	35.7	21.4	35.7	100.0
Gender	Female	20.7	34.5	24.1	20.7	100.0
	Male	39.1	13.0	17.4	30.4	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	3.7	22.2	25.9	48.1	100.0
	South East Asia	73.3	20.0	6.7	0.0	100.0
	Africa	30.0	40.0	30.0	0.0	100.0

**Table A9: Social networks within an ethnic community by cohort**

		What best describes your social networks within your ethnic community?				
		I have a strong network of friends	I have a couple of friends from my own ethnic background	I know people from my ethnic background but would not call them friends or ask for help	I do not mix with people from my ethnic community	Total
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	
All respondents		50.0	26.9	11.5	11.5	100.0
City	Perth	46.4	39.3	3.6	10.7	100.0
	Melbourne	54.2	12.5	20.8	12.5	100.0
Year of arrival in Australia	2008 or prior	70.0	20.0	5.0	5.0	100.0
	2009–10	44.4	22.2	16.7	16.7	100.0
	2011	28.6	42.9	14.3	14.3	100.0
Gender	Female	48.3	24.1	13.8	13.8	100.0
	Male	52.2	30.4	8.7	8.7	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	18.5	40.7	18.5	22.2	100.0
	South East Asia	93.3	6.7	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Africa	70.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	100.0

**Table A10: Racial or religious discrimination within neighbourhoods and wider society by cohort**

		Do you feel that there is racial or religious discrimination in your neighbourhood?						Do you feel that there is racial or religious discrimination in the wider society?					
		A lot of discrimination	Some discrimination	Little discrimination	No discrimination	Don't know	Total	A lot of discrimination	Some discrimination	Little discrimination	No discrimination	Don't know	Total
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	
	All respondents	0.0	17.3	15.4	44.2	23.1	100.0	19.2	23.1	13.5	25.0	19.2	100.0
City	Perth	0.0	21.4	10.7	32.1	35.7	100.0	17.9	28.6	7.1	21.4	25.0	100.0
	Melbourne	0.0	12.5	20.8	58.3	8.3	100.0	20.8	16.7	20.8	29.2	12.5	100.0
Year of arrival in Australia	2008 or prior	0.0	19.0	19.0	47.6	14.3	100.0	38.1	9.5	4.8	19.0	28.6	100.0
	2009–10	0.0	16.7	5.6	44.4	33.3	100.0	11.1	27.8	11.1	33.3	16.7	100.0
	2011	0.0	15.4	23.1	38.5	23.1	100.0	0.0	38.5	30.8	23.1	7.7	100.0
Gender	Female	0.0	20.0	23.3	33.3	23.3	100.0	26.7	30.0	6.7	20.0	16.7	100.0
	Male	0.0	13.6	4.5	59.1	22.7	100.0	9.1	13.6	22.7	31.8	22.7	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	0.0	15.4	15.4	30.8	38.5	100.0	3.8	42.3	23.1	19.2	11.5	100.0
	South East Asia	0.0	0.0	6.3	87.5	6.3	100.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	50.0	43.8	100.0
	Africa	0.0	50.0	30.0	10.0	10.0	100.0	90.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

Table A11: Safety at home by cohort

		I feel safe at home by myself during the day						I feel safe at home by myself after dark					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)		% (6)	% (7)	% (8)	% (9)	% (10)	
City	All respondents	3.9	7.8	11.8	70.6	5.9	100.0	7.7	25.0	9.6	53.8	3.8	100.0
	Perth	3.7	11.1	7.4	70.4	7.4	100.0	10.7	32.1	7.1	46.4	3.6	100.0
	Melbourne	4.2	4.2	16.7	70.8	4.2	100.0	4.2	16.7	12.5	62.5	4.2	100.0
Year of arrival in Australia	2008 or prior	4.8	4.8	19.0	61.9	9.5	100.0	4.8	28.6	23.8	38.1	4.8	100.0
	2009–10	0.0	11.1	11.1	77.8	0.0	100.0	5.6	33.3	0.0	61.1	0.0	100.0
	2011	8.3	8.3	0.0	75.0	8.3	100.0	15.4	7.7	0.0	69.2	7.7	100.0
Gender	Female	3.4	6.9	13.8	69.0	6.9	100.0	6.7	40.0	10.0	40.0	3.3	100.0
	Male	4.5	9.1	9.1	72.7	4.5	100.0	9.1	4.5	9.1	72.7	4.5	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	8.0	8.0	0.0	80.0	4.0	100.0	15.4	15.4	0.0	65.4	3.8	100.0
	South East Asia	0.0	6.3	12.5	75.0	6.3	100.0	0.0	18.8	12.5	62.5	6.3	100.0
	Africa	0.0	10.0	40.0	40.0	10.0	100.0	0.0	60.0	30.0	10.0	0.0	100.0

Table A12: Safety in local areas by cohort

		I feel safe walking alone in my suburb during the day						I feel safe walking alone in my local area after dark					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)		% (6)	% (7)	% (8)	% (9)	% (10)	
City	All respondents	3.9	3.9	13.7	68.6	9.8	100.0	9.6	42.3	17.3	28.8	1.9	100.0
	Perth	3.7	7.4	11.1	66.7	11.1	100.0	10.7	53.6	17.9	17.9	0.0	100.0
	Melbourne	4.2	0.0	16.7	70.8	8.3	100.0	8.3	29.2	16.7	41.7	4.2	100.0
Year of arrival in Australia	2008 or prior	5.0	0.0	20.0	70.0	5.0	100.0	9.5	38.1	23.8	23.8	4.8	100.0
	2009–10	0.0	5.6	16.7	66.7	11.1	100.0	5.6	55.6	11.1	27.8	0.0	100.0
	2011	7.7	7.7	0.0	69.2	15.4	100.0	15.4	30.8	15.4	38.5	0.0	100.0
Gender	Female	4.5	0.0	9.1	77.3	9.1	100.0	13.3	46.7	23.3	16.7	0.0	100.0
	Male	3.4	6.9	17.2	62.1	10.3	100.0	4.5	36.4	9.1	45.5	4.5	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	7.7	3.8	7.7	65.4	15.4	100.0	15.4	42.3	15.4	26.9	0.0	100.0
	South East Asia	0.0	6.3	0.0	87.5	6.3	100.0	0.0	43.8	6.3	43.8	6.3	100.0
	Africa	0.0	0.0	55.6	44.4	0.0	100.0	10.0	40.0	40.0	10.0	0.0	100.0

**Table A13: Feelings of safety on public transport by cohort**

		I feel safe and relaxed travelling on public transport					<i>Total</i>
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)	
	All respondents	1.9	17.3	13.5	57.7	9.6	100.0
City	Perth	0.0	31.0	10.3	41.4	13.8	100.0
	Melbourne	4.2	0.0	16.7	75.0	4.2	100.0
Year of arrival in Australia	2008 or prior	0.0	28.6	14.3	52.4	4.8	100.0
	2009–10	0.0	11.1	16.7	61.1	11.1	100.0
	2011	7.7	7.7	7.7	61.5	15.4	100.0
Gender	Female	0.0	26.7	10.0	50.0	13.3	100.0
	Male	4.5	4.5	18.2	68.2	4.5	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	3.8	11.5	7.7	61.5	15.4	100.0
	South East Asia	0.0	12.5	25.0	62.5	0.0	100.0
	Africa	0.0	40.0	10.0	40.0	10.0	100.0

**Table A14: Feelings of trust by cohort**

		Most people can be trusted						My doctor can be trusted					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)		% (6)	% (7)	% (8)	% (9)	% (10)	
	All respondents	9.6	46.2	23.1	21.2	0.0	100.0	0.0	13.7	15.7	64.7	5.9	100.0
City	Perth	14.3	53.6	25.0	7.1	0.0	100.0	0.0	22.2	14.8	59.3	3.7	100.0
	Melbourne	4.2	37.5	20.8	37.5	0.0	100.0	0.0	4.2	16.7	70.8	8.3	100.0
Year of arrival in Australia	2008 or prior	14.3	33.3	28.6	23.8	0.0	100.0	0.0	15.0	15.0	60.0	10.0	100.0
	2009–10	11.1	55.6	11.1	22.2	0.0	100.0	0.0	16.7	16.7	66.7	0.0	100.0
	2011	53.8	0.0	30.8	15.4	0.0	100.0	0.0	7.7	15.4	69.2	7.7	100.0
Gender	Female	10.0	53.3	23.3	13.3	0.0	100.0	0.0	13.8	17.2	65.5	3.4	100.0
	Male	9.1	36.4	22.7	31.8	0.0	100.0	0.0	13.6	13.6	63.6	9.1	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	7.7	53.8	23.1	15.4	0.0	100.0	0.0	7.7	19.2	69.2	3.8	100.0
	South East Asia	0.0	31.3	25.0	43.8	0.0	100.0	0.0	18.8	6.3	62.5	12.5	100.0
	Africa	30.0	50.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	22.2	22.2	55.6	0.0	100.0

Table A14 cont.

		Hospitals can be trusted						Police can be trusted					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)		% (6)	% (7)	% (8)	% (9)	% (10)	
	All respondents	0.0	18.0	16.0	56.0	10.0	100.0	5.9	9.8	19.6	54.9	9.8	100.0
City	Perth	0.0	11.1	14.8	59.3	14.8	100.0	0.0	17.9	25.0	50.0	7.1	100.0
	Melbourne	0.0	26.1	17.4	52.2	4.3	100.0	13.0	0.0	13.0	60.9	13.0	100.0
Year of arrival in Australia	2008 or prior	0.0	19.0	4.8	66.7	9.5	100.0	10.0	15.0	15.0	45.0	15.0	100.0
	2009–10	0.0	29.4	23.5	41.2	5.9	100.0	5.6	11.1	27.8	55.6	0.0	100.0
	2011	0.0	0.0	25.0	58.3	16.7	100.0	0.0	0.0	15.4	69.2	15.4	100.0
Gender	Female	0.0	23.3	16.7	50.0	10.0	100.0	6.9	13.8	17.2	51.7	10.3	100.0
	Male	0.0	10.0	15.0	65.0	10.0	100.0	4.5	4.5	22.7	59.1	9.1	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	0.0	12.0	24.0	52.0	12.0	100.0	0.0	3.8	23.1	65.4	7.7	100.0
	South East Asia	0.0	6.7	6.7	73.3	13.3	100.0	0.0	12.5	12.5	56.3	18.8	100.0
	Africa	0.0	50.0	10.0	40.0	0.0	100.0	33.3	22.2	22.2	22.2	0.0	100.0



Table A14 cont.

		People I work/study with can be trusted						Real estate agents can be trusted					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)		% (6)	% (7)	% (8)	% (9)	% (10)	
	All respondents	0.0	24.0	24.0	48.0	4.0	100.0	6.0	34.0	24.0	32.0	4.0	100.0
City	Perth	0.0	30.8	26.9	38.5	3.8	100.0	3.4	27.6	27.6	27.6	3.4	100.0
	Melbourne	0.0	16.7	20.8	58.3	4.2	100.0	8.3	37.5	16.7	33.3	4.2	100.0
Year of arrival in Australia	2008 or prior	0.0	19.0	38.1	38.1	4.8	100.0	4.8	28.6	19.0	38.1	9.5	100.0
	2009–10	0.0	35.3	17.6	47.1	0.0	100.0	0.0	52.9	23.5	23.5	0.0	100.0
	2011	0.0	16.7	8.3	66.7	8.3	100.0	16.7	16.7	33.3	33.3	0.0	100.0
Gender	Female	0.0	27.6	20.7	48.3	3.4	100.0	6.9	31.0	17.2	41.4	3.4	100.0
	Male	0.0	19.0	28.6	47.6	4.8	100.0	4.8	38.1	33.3	19.0	4.8	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	0.0	20.0	24.0	52.0	4.0	100.0	8.0	28.0	32.0	32.0	0.0	100.0
	South East Asia	0.0	26.7	6.7	60.0	6.7	100.0	0.0	26.7	20.0	46.7	6.7	100.0
	Africa	0.0	30.0	50.0	20.0	0.0	100.0	10.0	60.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	100.0

**Table A15: Demographic information by cohort**

		Age	All respondents	City		Length of residency in Australia			Gender		Region of origin		
			N=85	Perth	Melbourne	Less than 2 years	2 to 4 years	More than 4 years	Male	Female	Middle East	Asia	Africa
		Yrs-ave (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)	% (6)	% (7)	% (8)	% (9)	% (12)	% (13)	% (14)
City	Perth	35.2	50.0			16.7	55.6	100.0	46.7	75.0	50.0	0.0	100.0
	Melbourne	34.6	50.0			83.3	44.4	0.0	53.3	25.0	50.0	100.0	0.0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>34.9</i>	<i>100.0</i>			<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Length of residency in Australia	Less than 2 years	40.0	30.0	10.0	50.0				33.3	25.0	12.5	75.0	16.7
	2 to 4 years	29.7	45.0	50.0	40.0				46.7	50.0	75.0	25.0	33.3
	More than 4 years	39.0	20.0	40.0	90.0				20.0	25.0	12.5	0.0	50.0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>34.9</i>	<i>95.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>				<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Gender	Female	33.3	20.0	30.0	10.0	16.7	77.8	75.0			0.0	0.0	50.0
	Male	41.0	75.0	70.0	80.0	83.3	22.2	25.0			100.0	100.0	50.0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>34.9</i>	<i>95.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>90.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>			<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Region of origin	Middle East	28.8	40.0	40.0	40.0	16.7	66.7	25.0	53.3	0.0			
	Asia	40.3	20.0	0.0	40.0	50.0	11.1	0.0	26.7	0.0			
	Africa	37.8	30.0	60.0	0.0	16.7	22.2	75.0	20.0	75.0			
	<i>Total</i>	<i>34.9</i>	<i>90.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>80.0</i>	<i>83.3</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>75.0</i>			

**Table A16: English proficiency by cohort**

		How well do you SPEAK English?					How well do you READ and WRITE English?				
		Very well	Well	Not well	Not at all	Total	Very well	Well	Not well	Not at all	Total
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)		% (5)	% (6)	% (7)	% (8)	
All		55.0	25.0	20.0	0.0	100.0	20.0	60.0	15.0	5.0	100.0
City	Perth	30.0	40.0	30.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	80.0	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Melbourne	80.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	100.0	40.0	40.0	20.0	0.0	100.0
Length of residency in Australia	Less than 2 years	66.7	16.7	16.7	0.0	100.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	0.0	100.0
	2 to 4 years	66.7	11.1	22.2	0.0	100.0	22.2	55.6	11.1	11.1	100.0
	More than 4 years	25.0	75.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	25.0	75.0	0.0	100.0
Gender	Female	25.0	50.0	25.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	25.0	50.0	25.0	100.0
	Male	66.7	20.0	13.3	0.0	100.0	26.7	66.7	6.7	0.0	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	75.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	100.0	12.5	75.0	12.5	0.0	100.0
	Asia	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Africa	16.7	50.0	33.3	0.0	100.0	0.0	66.7	16.7	16.7	100.0

**Table A17: Employment information by cohort**

		Employed before coming to Australia			Employed at time of survey		
		Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
		% (1)	% (2)		% (3)	% (4)	
All		70.0	30.0	100.0	20.0	80.0	100.0
City	Perth	80.0	20.0	100.0	30.0	70.0	100.0
	Melbourne	60.0	40.0	100.0	10.0	90.0	100.0
Length of residency in Australia	Less than 2 years	50.0	50.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
	2 to 4 years	73.3	26.7	100.0	20.0	80.0	100.0
	More than 4 years	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Gender	Female	83.3	16.7	100.0	16.7	83.3	100.0
	Male	55.6	44.4	100.0	22.2	77.8	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	75.0	25.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
	Asia	75.0	25.0	100.0	25.0	75.0	100.0
	Africa	75.0	25.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

**Table A18: Current housing situation by cohort—percentage of respondents currently in each type of accommodation**

		Current type of accommodation								Total
		Short-medium-term housing provided by a settlement service	Specialist Transitional Asylum Seeking Housing Program	Transitional housing provided by a community assistance support provider	Staying with relatives temporarily	Staying in crisis accommodation or a refuge	Sleeping rough	Private rental	Community housing	
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)	% (6)	% (7)	% (8)	
All		20.0	30.0	5.0	10.0	20.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	100.0
City	Perth	0.0	0.0	10.0	20.0	40.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Melbourne	40.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Length of residency in Australia	Less than 2 years	33.3	50.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	2 to 4 years	11.1	33.3	11.1	11.1	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	More than 4 years	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	100.0
Gender	Female	25.0	0.0	25.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Male	13.3	40.0	0.0	0.0	26.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Asia	12.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	37.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Africa	25.0	75.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Perth	0.0	0.0	16.7	33.3	16.7	0.0	16.7	16.7	100.0

**Table A19: Accommodation history by cohort—percentage of respondents previously spending time in each type of accommodation**

		Type of accommodation												Total
		Transitional housing provided by a community assistance support provider	Short-medium-term housing provided by a settlement service	Specialist Transitional Asylum Seeking Housing Program	Staying with relatives temporarily	Staying with friends temporarily	Boarding house / hostel	Crisis accommodation / refuge	Sleeping rough	Private rental housing	Public housing	Community housing	Other (Adult correction facility, mosque, holidaying, ex-prisoner housing, workplace accommodation)	
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	
All		10.0	10.0	30.0	25.0	45.0	20.0	25.0	15.0	65.0	20.0	5.0	20	100.0
City	Perth	0.0	10.0	0.0	30.0	40.0	40.0	40.0	30.0	70.0	20.0	10.0	30.0	100.0
	Melbourne	20.0	10.0	60.0	20.0	50.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	60.0	20.0	0.0	10.0	100.0
Length of residency in Australia	Less than 2 years	16.7	0.0	50.0	16.7	50.0	16.7	33.3	0.0	50.0	16.7	0.0	33.3	100.0
	2 to 4 years	11.1	22.2	33.3	33.3	66.7	33.3	33.3	22.2	77.8	11.1	0.0	0.0	100.0
	More than 4 years	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	75.0	50.0	25.0	50	100.0
Gender	Female	25.0	25.0	0.0	75.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Male	6.7	6.7	40.0	13.3	46.7	26.7	33.3	20.0	66.7	20.0	6.7	26.7	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	12.5	12.5	37.5	25.0	50.0	37.5	37.5	37.5	62.5	12.5	0.0	12.5	100.0
	Asia	0.0	0.0	75.0	0.0	75.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	50.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	100.0
	Africa	0.0	16.7	0.0	50.0	33.3	16.7	16.7	0.0	100.0	33.3	16.7	33.3	100.0

**Table A20: Accommodation history by cohort—percentage of total time spent in each type of accommodation**

		Type of accommodation												Total
		Transitional housing provided by a community assistance support	Short-medium-term housing provided by a settlement service	Specialist Transitional Asylum Seeking Housing Program	Staying with relatives temporarily	Staying with friends temporarily	Boarding house/hostel	Crisis accommodation/refuge	Sleeping rough	Private rental housing	Public housing	Community housing	Other (Adult correction facility, mosque, holidaying, ex-prisoner housing, workplace accommodation)	
		% (1)	% (2)	% (3)	% (4)	% (5)	% (6)	% (7)	% (8)	% (9)	% (10)	% (11)	% (12)	
All		1.1	7.4	2.0	4.5	2.5	14.6	6.5	45.3	6.8	1.3	1.1	7.0	100.0
City	Perth	0.0	1.2	0.0	2.3	2.6	3.4	19.4	8.8	44.3	6.9	1.7	9.5	100.0
	Melbourne	3.9	0.6	27.5	1.4	9.8	0.0	1.4	0.0	48.3	6.7	0.0	0.3	100.0
Length of residency in Australia	Less than 2 years	9.2	0.0	20.4	2.8	14.8	14.8	12.0	0.0	18.3	5.6	0.0	2.1	100.0
	2 to 4 years	0.2	2.2	10.9	1.6	6.1	1.9	27.9	0.6	46.1	2.5	0.0	0.0	100.0
	More than 4 years	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.8	51.4	12.1	3.1	16.3	100.0
Gender	Female	4.2	3.9	0.0	7.1	6.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	63.3	14.9	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Male	0.1	0.2	9.6	0.5	3.9	3.2	19.0	8.4	39.9	4.4	1.7	9.1	100.0
Region of origin	Middle East	0.2	0.4	12.5	0.9	3.0	2.1	31.5	15.3	20.6	2.8	0.0	10.7	100.0
	Asia	0.0	0.0	19.6	0.0	16.1	0.0	3.5	0.0	54.5	5.6	0.0	0.7	100.0
	Africa	0.0	2.0	0.0	3.6	3.3	3.4	2.0	0.0	66.8	10.9	2.8	5.2	100.0

**Table A 21: Accommodation history by cohort—average time of each distinct period in each type of accommodation**

		Type of accommodation											
		<i>Overall</i>	Transitional housing provided by a community assistance support provider	Short-medium-term housing provided by a settlement service	Specialist Transitional Asylum Seeking Housing Program	Staying with relatives temporarily	Staying with friends temporarily	Boarding house / hostel	Crisis accommodation / refuge	Sleeping rough	Private rental housing	Public housing	Community housing
		<i>Half-months</i>	Half-months (1)	Half-months (2)	Half-months (3)	Half-months (4)	Half-months (5)	Half-months (6)	Half-months (7)	Half-months (8)	Half-months (9)	Half-months (10)	Half-months (11)
All		18.0	7.0	7.0	16.3	3.9	6.7	8.3	38.8	10.8	37.7	18.2	17.0
City	Perth	20.7	0.0	12.0	0.0	4.4	6.3	8.3	47.3	10.8	47.9	22.3	17.0
	Melbourne	13.2	7.0	2.0	16.3	2.5	7.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	24.6	12.0	0.0
Length of residency in Australia	Less than 2 years	8.4	13.0	0.0	9.7	4.0	7.0	21.0	8.5	0.0	8.7	8.0	0.0
	2 to 4 years	19.8	1.0	7.0	23.0	3.3	6.5	4.0	59.0	2.0	36.6	16.0	0.0
	More than 4 years	22.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.7	56.8	22.3	17.0
Gender	Female	19.3	13.0	12.0	0.0	4.4	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	39.0	23.0	0.0
	Male	17.6	1.0	2.0	16.3	2.5	5.7	8.3	38.8	10.8	37.1	15.0	17.0
Region of origin	Middle East	15.2	1.0	2.0	23.3	2.5	4.3	4.0	59.0	10.8	19.3	16.0	0.0
	Asia	13.0	0.0	0.0	9.3	0.0	7.7	0.0	5.0	0.0	39.0	8.0	0.0
	Africa	24.5	0.0	12.0	0.0	4.4	10.0	21.0	12.0	0.0	51.1	22.3	17.0



**Table A22: Accommodation history by cluster**

		Type of accommodation											
		<i>Overall</i>	Transitional housing provided by a community assistance support provider	Short-medium term housing provided by a settlement service	Specialist Transitional Asylum Seeking Housing Program	Staying with relatives temporarily	Staying with friends temporarily	Boarding house / hostel	Crisis accommodation / refuge	Sleeping rough	Private rental housing	Public housing	Community housing
Cluster 1	Respondents (% of cluster)	100.0	14.3	7.1	35.7	21.4	42.9	28.6	35.7	21.4	57.1	21.4	0.0
	Total time spent (%)	100.0	1.7	0.2	11.8	2.2	4.0	4.1	24.0	10.7	24.8	8.7	0.0
	Average length of each spell of accommodation (half-months)	13.9	7.0	0.0	19.0	3.6	5.3	8.3	38.8	10.8	18.2	17.5	0.0
Cluster 2	Respondents (% of cluster)	100.0	0.0	20.0	20.0	40.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	20.0	20.0
	Total time spent (%)	100.0	0.0	2.3	0.6	1.7	5.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	77.1	4.0	3.3
	Average length of each spell of accommodation (half-months)	32.7	0.0	0.0	3.0	4.5	9.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	80.6	21.0	17.0

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