



Australian Government  
Department of Social Services



# Humanitarian Settlement Services

Regional Profile #9  
Wagga Wagga, New South Wales

## Contents

<b>Humanitarian Settlement Services</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>About Wagga Wagga</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Service providers</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Health Services</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Employment Opportunities</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>A welcoming community</b>	<b>6</b>

DSS wishes to express its thanks to St Vincent De Paul and the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga Inc for compiling this material.

While every care has been taken, DSS makes no guarantees that the information provided is up to date.

For further information on the Humanitarian Settlement Services programme see:  
**Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS)**

## About Wagga Wagga

Wagga Wagga has a population of 63 500 and 6.7 per cent of the community were born overseas and over 30 per cent of residents speak a language other than English.

Since November 2005 the Riverina Consortium has welcomed over 350 families and more than 900 individuals from many nations within Africa, Asia and the Middle East.



## Service providers

Humanitarian Settlement Service (HSS) services provided in the region focus on helping refugees to gain access to mainstream services such as Centrelink, Medicare, banks, general and specialist health and medical services, English language tuition, training and employment, in addition to links to the community and community organisations.

The Riverina Consortium members St Vincent de Paul and the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga Inc. provide settlement services within the Riverina region on behalf of the Department of Social Services (DSS). The region includes the cities of Wagga Wagga, Griffith, Albury and Wodonga.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a Catholic organisation that offers a 'hand up' to people in need. Members visit people in their homes or meet with them at the Care & Support Centre to assess their individual needs and provide support.



**Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga**

The goal is not to provide long term support but to help individuals and families with short-term solutions and help with issues stopping them from gaining long-term stability.

Assistance can include:

- providing furniture, clothing & household goods
- giving food parcels or vouchers
- paying bills such as electricity, water, phone and rent
- financial counselling.

Members focus on compassion and understanding and recognising the different needs of individuals. Services provided in the Wagga Wagga area include:

- Humanitarian Settlement Services (Riverina Consortium)
- Care & Support Centre - 207 Edward Street
- Centres of Charity at Turvey Tops and Ashmont
- The Furniture Store in Edward Street
- Micah House at 53 Gurwood Street
- Edel Quinn Men's Shelter.

The Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga Inc (MCWW) helps with settlement issues and provides advocacy, information and referrals for clients to main stream service providers.

Under the HSS programme, the MCWW provides:

- needs assessment and case management plans
- reception for new arrivals
- property inductions and orientation

- help registering with Medicare, Centrelink, banks and schools or higher education facilities
- health services
- youth sub plans
- help finding safe and affordable accommodation.

The HSS programme provides intensive support for humanitarian entrants during their first six months in Australia. The Settlement Grant activities help all new arrivals for up to five years after their arrival. The Settlement Grant activities also help clients orient themselves to their new community, assists new communities to develop and promotes social participation and integration.

## Accommodation

Compared to other major cities in Australia, Wagga Wagga offers more affordable housing. Average rents (as at September 2012) are:

- three bedroom house: \$200-\$600 per week
- two bedroom unit/flat: \$160-\$500 per week
- one bedroom unit/flat: \$160-\$210 per week.

Most houses are within five km of the Central Business District and easily accessible to public transport. They are generally chosen based on how much clients can pay from their Centrelink allowance.

## Education

All education institutions in the region offer services to refugees, including pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary.

Riverina TAFE Wagga currently offers Certificates 1, 2 and 3 in Spoken and Written English (CSWE) four mornings a week for three hours. Additional elective classes are offered in pronunciation, computer skills or driving. Certificate 2/3 groups have a careers class as well.

Classes are offered for 12 to 18 hours during the daytime at the TAFE and there are two evening classes on Mondays and Wednesdays held in the TAFE library. Currently there are mixed classes with Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), TVH and other ESOL students.

Horticulture classes held on Friday mornings at North Wagga TAFE campus are currently attended by a number of AMEP students. There are bridging courses available at the Riverina TAFE for students who would like to attend university.



**Wagga Wagga**

## Health Services

The Wagga Refugee Health Assessment Clinic operates on Mondays from the Wagga GP After Hours Service facility. It is staffed by GPs with a special interest in refugee health and a refugee health nurse.

Comprehensive health assessments and appropriate follow-up are undertaken for newly arrived humanitarian entrants. Ongoing care is provided by the GP of the patients' choice.

## Employment Opportunities

Most employment opportunities are currently at the local abattoir (TEYS). Once clients are more fluent in English they may go on to study in the areas of aged care, hospitality and bridging courses to continue on to university study.

Job Services Australia providers in Wagga Wagga are:

- Sureway
- Summit
- Workforce On Tap
- Skilled.

## A welcoming community

The Wagga City Council supports people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds through a variety of projects, programmes and partnerships. This includes the celebration of Harmony Day and events for Refugee Week, Naidoc Week and the local Multicultural Festival as well as regular citizenship ceremonies.

- Riverina Consortium has a very strong and well established volunteer programme.
- Centrelink has a Multicultural Service Officer based in the Griffith office who works in Wagga as required.
- Centacare offers counselling for families.
- Church groups are very supportive.
- Wafrika is the Wagga African Association which represents the various African cultures living in Wagga and acts as a bridge between African community members and the rest of Wagga.
- Burmese migrants have formed a strong community and make new arrivals from their country very welcome.

Wagga Library offers a large range of resources in different languages.