Settlement Issues Information

SGP Funding Round 2013-14
## Contents

Defining successful settlement ......................................................................................... 1

Indicators of settlement outcomes .................................................................................. 1

SGP guiding principles ........................................................................................................ 2

Characteristics of the SGP target group ........................................................................... 2

  - Humanitarian entrants ................................................................................................. 2
  - Family stream migrants with low levels of English language proficiency .................. 2
  - Dependants of skilled migrants with low English proficiency in regional areas .......... 4

Sources of information in identifying settlement needs .................................................. 4

Types of needs facing the SGP target group ..................................................................... 4

Social participation ............................................................................................................. 6

  - Education and training ................................................................................................. 6
  - English language skills ............................................................................................... 8
  - Legal and justice ........................................................................................................... 9

Economic well-being ......................................................................................................... 11

  - Employment ................................................................................................................ 11
  - Housing/Accommodation ............................................................................................ 13

Independence ...................................................................................................................... 14

  - Life skills ................................................................................................................... 14

Personal well-being ............................................................................................................ 16

  - Health ....................................................................................................................... 16

Life Satisfaction and being connected to the Community ............................................... 17

  - Connecting to the community .................................................................................... 17
This document provides a summary of settlement needs of new arrivals to Australia. The purpose of the information is to assist service providers to target applications for SGP funding to ensure that services are responsive to identified settlement needs.

The information provided includes the following:

- how the department defines successful settlement
- a description of the SGP target group, including their characteristics
- key challenges and types of needs that new arrivals typically face when establishing a new life
- examples, as a guide only, of the kinds of assistance the SGP target group are likely to need for successful settlement and connecting to the broader Australian community.

**Defining successful settlement**

Settlement is a period of adjustment that migrants experience before they become established, independent and can fully participate in Australian society.

The success of the settlement experience relies on both the willingness of Australian society to welcome new arrivals, how well settlement services address the needs of new arrivals and the commitment of those arrivals to establishing a life in Australia.

The department funded settlement services, including the SGP, are part of the whole-of-government responsibility to assist new arrivals to achieve successful settlement outcomes. Many of the on arrival and longer term needs of entrants are shared with the wider Australian community. New arrivals with mainstream needs will be referred to mainstream service providers to access available assistance, where appropriate.

**Indicators of settlement outcomes**

The types of services delivered under the SGP are aimed at delivering a settlement outcome for clients comprised of the key settlement dimensions of:

- social participation
- economic well-being
- personal well-being
- independence
- life satisfaction and being connected to the community.

A diagram providing a conceptual framework for understanding settlement outcomes is at Attachment A.
SGP guiding principles

The following overarching principles guide the delivery of SGP services.

SGP providers:

1. Work in communities to support responsive local services, build capacity and community connections and create a welcoming environment and opportunities for new arrivals.

2. Work with individuals through the provision of casework services to connect them to mainstream services.

3. Promote access and equity by playing a brokerage and advocacy role with government agencies on behalf of establishing communities.

Characteristics of the SGP target group

Migrants settle at different rates and levels. Some migrants will make their way in Australian society quickly and independently requiring little or no support services. Others may take some years and need assistance from a wide range of services. Many different factors impact on how well migrants settle in Australia, including their pre-migration experiences, level of education and employment history, English proficiency, state of health, life plans and aspirations and experiences upon arrival.

Humanitarian entrants

Humanitarian entrants generally have the highest settlement needs due to their pre-arrival experiences. Such experiences can include insecure and temporary living conditions together with inadequate access to essentials such as clean water, food, shelter, healthcare and safety.

For many humanitarian entrants, the process of adjusting to significant differences in the culture and lifestyle of Australia, compared to their country of origin, can be challenging as they deal with the effects of pre-arrival and post-arrival stresses.

Humanitarian entrants may also have experienced limited education and employment opportunities, may have limited or no English proficiency and can be illiterate in their own language. They may also be unfamiliar with technology, including household and workplace appliances, and unfamiliar with the values and practices of participatory democracy, including rights, responsibilities, and the role of different authorities.

Family stream migrants with low levels of English language proficiency

Family stream migrants have generally made a free choice to migrate to Australia and will be
able to canvas both settlement and social support from family members already in Australia. Their pre-arrival experiences are also generally less disruptive than those of humanitarian entrants.
However, as with humanitarian entrants, family stream migrants who come from significantly different cultural or language backgrounds with low levels of English proficiency may experience challenges when settling. They may be unfamiliar with the Australian service environment. They may also find it difficult to adjust to Australian norms and to interact with the broader community. Low levels of English proficiency can compound these challenges, creating isolation and difficulty in accessing services.

Dependants of skilled migrants with low English proficiency in regional areas

Skilled migrants are generally proficient in English and have good employment prospects. As such they are not expected to require specialised settlement services. Skilled migrants are also expected to help their dependants through the settlement process. However, dependants of skilled migrants with low English proficiency who have settled in rural and regional areas are likely to face some challenges due to less cultural awareness on the part of mainstream service providers and the broader community, particularly if settling in areas of low cultural diversity. Proposals to service dependants of skilled migrants with low English proficiency will only be considered in rural and regional areas.

Sources of information in identifying settlement needs

The department collects information on settlement needs through ongoing interactions with a range of stakeholders. These include various Settlement Network fora which incorporate local, state/territory and federal agencies, the settlement service sector, and local community groups. This information is captured and reported by our State and Territory Offices (STOs). The department also consults regularly with relevant peak bodies, advisory bodies and reference groups representing the settlement sector.

Settlement needs are also identified through analysis of research on settlement issues and through feedback received by the department on its Settlement and Multicultural programs.

The identification of settlement needs has also been informed by the work of the former Ministerial Council on Immigration and Citizenship (MCIMA) Working Party on Settlement Issues in identifying priority areas for settlement and related services.

Types of needs facing the SGP target group

The following settlement needs provide a guide to some of the challenges faced by new arrivals when settling in Australia. While the general needs of new arrivals do not change from year to year, the following information has been refined and updated to reflect changing settlement patterns and emerging issues.

The following types of services are funded under the SGP to address identified settlement needs:

- Casework/coordination and delivery of services
- Community coordination and development
- Youth settlement services
- Support for ethno-specific communities.
Examples of appropriate activities and the relevant service types are also included under each settlement indicator. These examples are not intended to limit proposals for innovative services designed to address other settlement related issues and needs.

Social participation

Education and training

Many new settlers arrive in Australia with low English language proficiency and, in some cases, limited literacy skills. Many humanitarian entrants have also had limited, disrupted or no prior schooling. This creates significant challenges and there may be a need for better transition support for young people entering mainstream education and for those moving to vocational training.

As a result of pre-arrival experiences, many school-aged humanitarian entrant children face additional barriers to engaging successfully with the education system when compared to their same-age peers. The inability of young people to effectively participate at school can lead to frustration, depression and disengagement from the education system.

Arriving at an age where it is not compulsory to be enrolled in school means that those who do not easily fit into education and training systems are often not catered for and risk having their need overlooked.

Parents with limited prior education are likely to have limited capacity to assist their children with study and may need support to effectively engage in their children’s education. While the SGP does not fund English language, numeracy or employment skills training, SGP services may include providing on a casework basis, advice, advocacy or referral to clients relating to the following:

- requirements of the Australian educational system including, how to enrol children (including for pre-school aged children), information on attendance at school being compulsory, increasing the understanding of school curriculum and the requirements of an age-based education system
- advice to parents on how to purchase uniforms and equipment, provide packed lunches and to interact with the school community
- support outside of school hours including homework support programs and access to home tutoring schemes, information aimed at helping reinforce classroom teaching, encouraging confidence and support to remain engaged in schools or other learning environments.
- assisting young people of post-compulsory school age to engage in alternative education and training and employment options including apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities, providing information on prerequisites for enrolling in tertiary education including alternative entry options including bridging courses etc, information on the importance of qualifications in gaining employment and referral to appropriate education, training and employment providers
• early intervention approaches to retain students at risk of disengagement including referral to community learning, mentoring programs, counselling services.
These examples may be appropriate as part of service types: casework/coordination and delivery of services as well as youth settlement services.

**English language skills**

For many new settlers from non-English speaking backgrounds, learning English is one of the first and most important steps they can take towards settling successfully in their new home and achieving their personal, social and economic goals. Functional spoken and written English skills are an important element for new arrivals to independently secure employment, access education, interact with the broader Australian community and access essential services. Many new arrivals are eligible for assistance under the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). However, new arrivals may need on a casework basis, information, advice, advocacy and referral on:

- reinforcing the value of utilising English language classes including awareness of available English language programs, how to access them and the importance of regular attendance
- opportunities to practice English skills in social, conversational and practical settings
- how to access and use translating and interpreting services including phone interpreting services.

These examples may be appropriate as part of the following service types: casework/coordination and delivery of services as well as youth settlement services.

**Family, relationships and social support**

Family structures and dynamics can be significantly impacted by the migration experience. Migration can place great stress on families caused by alienation, sense of displacement and difficulties adjusting to settlement. In some cases such stress can lead to intergenerational conflict, family breakdown and domestic violence.

New arrivals may find that Australian attitudes (and legislation) regarding gender roles and rights differ considerably from those of their country of origin and cultural background. Changing roles of husbands and wives can place a strain on family relationships, and in some cases men may require additional support to cope with changes in status/disempowerment within the family. Young women may have trouble establishing their own households because of their own community’s perception of this situation.

Parenting may also become more difficult in a new environment. Parents may need to deal with issues arising from cross-cultural interactions and inter-generational issues. Australian parenting practices may also contrast with those of their country of origin, in particular child supervision and accepted forms of parental discipline, leading to intergenerational conflict and sometimes the involvement of child protection services. Parents may also feel concerned that their children are losing their cultural identity, leading to anxiety and family conflict.

Financial pressures related to affordable housing, unemployment, repaying debts and sending remittances can also generate additional pressures within families.
The SGP does not fund organisations to provide specialist counselling services. However, appropriate SGP activities (including casework services) may include:

- information provision and linking clients to appropriate mainstream services which provide early intervention workshops / information sessions for young people and parents—together and separately, looking at community's expectations around parenting, roles, family relationships, rights & obligations under Australian law
- information on and referral to appropriate specialist counselling services including culturally appropriate specific family mediation, information and support
- information on and referral to programs designed to manage intergenerational conflict
- information on and linking clients to groups that provide social support and capacity building opportunities, such as men's, women's or parenting groups
- programs for newly arrived young humanitarian entrants that explore both rights and responsibilities and cultural orientation in Australia, providing the opportunities for young people to express themselves, and build peer support networks
- in cases of family conflict, information about legal issues and the roles of police and courts, Australia's family law provisions and the role of child protection agencies.

These examples may be appropriate as part of service types: casework/coordination and delivery of services and youth settlement services.

Legal and justice

New arrivals may need assistance to interact effectively with the legal system. They may have a lack of knowledge or misunderstanding about their rights and liberties in Australia.

Humanitarian arrivals that have experienced persecution in their home countries may be unfamiliar with the role of police and the justice system in Australia. As a result, they lack trust and confidence in the police and judicial systems. In addition to these factors, the perceived stereotyping and discrimination/harassment from police can influence relations with police at the local community level and in turn precipitate encounters with the justice system eg absconding during everyday police interactions such as breath testing.

There may be a need to improve relations between humanitarian entrants and care and protection workers including police, through cross-cultural training.

New arrivals may need assistance to understand Australia’s legal and judicial systems. Some lack knowledge on how to access legal representation and navigate the court system (including the Family Court) in order to participate equitably in legal proceedings.

New arrivals are often easy targets for unscrupulous vendors as they are unaware of their legal rights as consumers and lack sufficient understanding of the legal system to pursue justice for consumer issues through legal avenues. Many may be reluctant to report crimes or admit to their own legal problems due to misunderstandings about the potential consequences, or out of fear due to their pre-arrival experiences.
Appropriate SGP services may include casework, providing referrals to legal services and providing information on:

- Australia’s legal framework, government systems, court proceedings and key justice agencies
- the role of police and how to seek their assistance
- Australian law, including information on a range of issues such as road rules, infringement notices, vehicle ownership and insurance, spouse abuse and physical domestic violence (including apprehended violence orders), family law issues including divorce and child protection legislation and child labour laws. This could also include information on legal aid and administrative law issues involving appeal of decisions made by Centrelink, and applications to change name or birth date and applications for Citizenship
- legal issues relating to private rental and public housing
- banking practices and consumer rights to avoid incurring debt, financial penalties or becoming prey to fraud and exploitation

Family reunion is a key focus for many humanitarian entrants. Some humanitarian entrants may need assistance with processes for reuniting with family members residing overseas. Under the SGP immigration assistance must be provided by a registered migration agent as a component of casework for humanitarian entrants who wish to propose family members, where this has been assessed as necessary for the client’s successful settlement. Formal arrangements will need to be established between SGP service providers and providers of immigration assistance (if these are different).

Appropriate SGP casework services may include:

- referral to registered Migration Agents
- provision of immigration related administrative services without the use of a migration agent including obtaining forms, assisting with the completion of the form or assisting to access the department’s website or helpline.
- managing the often high expectations of clients with regards to bringing family to Australia, including providing information about places available under the SHP, information on the level of services available etc.

These examples may be appropriate as part of service type: casework/coordination and delivery of services.
Economic well-being

Employment

Unemployment and under-employment present major barriers to successful settlement.

New entrants who arrive with a lack of formal education and employment experience face great challenges in gaining employment. Limited English language and literacy skills, limited access to transport and housing close to employment opportunities, discrimination and racism can further compound the difficulties encountered when seeking work.

Entrants less familiar in job searching techniques may need access to coaching, mentoring programs, career advice, pre-vocational training, bridging courses and work experience opportunities. They may also require information about Australian workplace systems and culture, including rights and responsibilities in the workplace, occupational health and safety practices, recruitment practices and the importance of reporting earnings to the Australian Tax Office and Centrelink.

Some new arrivals have considerable work experience and qualifications and are therefore able to make the transition to working in Australia quickly. They may, however, need assistance to access employment programs and gain recognition of skills and overseas qualifications. Some may also need assistance to establish and operate their own businesses including help in developing business plans, providing business mentoring and assistance in navigating complex small business requirements.

Appropriate SGP services may include casework, providing referrals and providing information on:

- suitable employment readiness programs to improve employment outcomes including orientation to work, job searching and applying for jobs, preparing resumes and responses to selection criteria, interview techniques and advice on suitable workplace attire
- industrial relations including workers rights, occupational health and safety, workplace culture, systems, services and norms, workplace rights and responsibilities and point of access for overseas skills/qualifications recognition.
- success stories of pathways/outcomes for humanitarian entrants in employment including information on work experience placements, internships and volunteering
- encouraging career counselling or advice to assist people in choosing a realistic career path and pursuing appropriate educational, training and work experience opportunities.
- information on Centrelink’s job readiness assessment process (eg purpose for assessments), referral to vocational training services, Job Services Australia providers or other employment agencies.

These examples may be appropriate as part of service types: casework/coordination and
delivery of services and youth settlement services.
Housing/Accommodation

Securing suitable long-term accommodation is important for new arrivals to provide stability and security and to enable development of social networks in their local community. New arrivals experience the same challenges in finding appropriate housing that many Australian residents encounter, including housing affordability (particularly for single clients and single parents) as well as the general shortage of rental accommodation in most parts of Australia.

New arrivals may encounter additional barriers when sourcing accommodation (especially for larger families). As newly arrived migrants, they are often unable to provide a record of past rental history or referee reports, particularly for many humanitarian entrants who have spent extended periods of time in refugee camps prior to arrival in Australia. Barriers from unemployment and low English language proficiency further compound the difficulties encountered. This can result in people living in substandard accommodation, overcrowding, divided families, family and neighbourhood tensions, evictions and homelessness.

Many also encounter discrimination or exploitation from landlords and real estate agents. Access to public transport, cultural services, shops and schools is paramount for humanitarian entrants looking for stable housing options.

Accommodation assistance under the SGP is aimed at helping clients source long term accommodation. The provision of accommodation assistance requires a sophisticated understanding of the legal and government housing arrangements in each state and territory as well as a strong relationship with real estate agents, state government housing authorities and social housing providers.

Appropriate SGP services delivered through casework, information sessions, advice, advocacy and referral may include:

- education on realistic housing options to manage expectations of housing affordability
- housing support services including how to apply for public housing including eligibility requirements and assistance with forms, how to access accommodation, such as where accommodation is advertised, how to interact with real estate agents and how to find rental accommodation
- tenancy rights and responsibilities in order to avoid exploitative tenancy arrangements/practices
- tenant obligations including property maintenance, budgeting skills to manage rental payments, bond deposit and recovery, understanding lease agreements and consequences of breaking a lease agreement
- educational programs for real estate agents to improve their understanding of SGP eligible clients and build better relations, including training on cultural differences and accommodation needs and providing access to interpreters
SGP service providers can provide information to help eligible clients source long term accommodation. In addition a small number of SGP providers may be funded in identified service regions to provide casework and case coordination involving intensive accommodation assistance where this issue is inhibiting a client’s settlement and such services are not available through other mechanisms. SGP providers will be required to demonstrate partnership arrangements with accommodation assistance providers. A TIS National free telephone interpreting service is being piloted by the department with selected real estate agents across Australia to assist with the delivery of housing services.

These examples may be appropriate as part of service types: casework/coordination and delivery of services and youth settlement services.

**Independence**

**Life skills**

Many humanitarian entrants have experienced significant and ongoing instability in their lives and have not had the opportunity to develop a range of skills required for life in an urbanised Western culture. Providing information and opportunities to learn more about Australian culture, customs and behavioural norms can assist new arrivals to better understand their new home and interact with the broader Australian community.

Following an assessment of prior learning, eligible clients may need assistance or information on:

- managing an Australian-style household (for example, using appliances such as electric kettles and stovetops and utilities such as hot water and gas)
- training available on computers and using the internet
- using public transport and the ability to read maps, bus timetables, how to purchase tickets etc
- water safety—lack of awareness of water safety places some SGP Target Groups at high risk of drowning accidents, particularly for those located in coastal areas
- road rules, road safety, vehicle registration and the importance of having appropriate insurance in the case of accidents or theft of a vehicle
- obtaining a driver's license, the use of driving instructors and driving programs, and licence laws
- managing finances, including household budgeting, paying bills, the Australian banking system,
- programs to assist understanding of contractual conditions and obligations (eg credit cards, mobile phones, loans, life insurance) financial responsibilities in entering consumer contracts
- accessing mainstream services including interacting with government agencies, including
being on time for appointments, understanding written correspondence and completing forms.
These examples may be appropriate as part of service types: casework/coordination and delivery of services and youth settlement services.

**Personal well-being**

**Health**

New arrivals face the same challenges as other Australians in accessing health care services including the limited availability of general practitioners (particularly bulk-billing providers), dentists, optometrists, ophthalmologists and other medical specialists. However, many new arrivals will also need additional guidance to understand the Australian health system, the role of Medicare, what services are available, and how to access them and the language and interpreting services they are entitled to (including doctor’s priority line and option to specify the gender of the interpreter.

In some cases there is a lack of understanding by new entrants of counselling and what it means. Mental health issues associated with the refugee experience may not manifest themselves immediately, rather, they may become apparent some time after initial settlement. Humanitarian and refugee entrants may lack family and friendship networks and face isolation in their new communities.

In some cases, arrivals may also require awareness of the prevalence of mental health issues and the value of counselling, to address stigma associated with mental health conditions. Humanitarian entrants as a result of pre-arrival experiences may also be more at risk of developing psychological disorders (including depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder) and more at risk as a result of previously undetected or poorly managed chronic health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

Organisations are not funded through the SGP to provide medical assistance or advice or to provide counselling services. These are specialist services best provided by qualified and experienced professionals. However, SGP services may include casework to provide information, advice, advocacy, referral and group information on:

- promoting an understanding of the Australian health system, including how to make an appointment with a General Practitioner, how and when to use emergency and ambulance services, the need for referral to a specialist and the importance of following instructions about medicines, the need to retain medical history papers including immunisation information and an understanding of Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
- accessing appropriate counselling services including torture and trauma and psychological services
- better preventative health measures including information dissemination about healthy living, exercise, good nutrition, good food choices, food safety/storage, food labelling, the importance of immunisations
• targeted education on health issues for specific groups, particularly women and young people on topics including sexual health, communicable and lifestyle diseases, dental health, disability, alcoholism, pregnancy, the importance of immunisations, pap smears, mammograms etc, health assessment and treatment

• promoting refugee health issues and needs of target group clients to medical and health specialists This includes the need for longer consultation times, encouraging cultural competency, raising awareness of support services available to assist practitioners, the importance of using qualified interpreters to communicate with refugee patients and the need for maintaining consistent access for new arrivals

• mental health issues

• aged-care services and ethno-specific carer groups and agencies.

These examples may be appropriate as part of service types: casework/coordination and delivery of services and youth settlement services.

**Life Satisfaction and being connected to the Community**

**Connecting to the community**

Some new arrivals need assistance to make social connections. Adapting to a new social environment can be daunting and new entrants may lack the confidence to seek out opportunities for social engagement. Arrivals with low-level English language skills, from small and establishing communities, the elderly and those settling in rural areas, can be particularly vulnerable to social isolation.

New arrivals may need assistance to make connections with members of their own ethnic community, an important step in developing a sense of identity in a new place. Entrants may also need support to develop social networks in the broader Australian community and to raise the profile of their own community.

Being part of a cohesive community in Australia assists new arrivals to better negotiate the settlement experience, combat feelings of isolation, and in turn, provide support to more recent entrants. It is important to develop solutions to foster the ability of newly arrived communities to organise and engage with governments, service providers and the Australian community at large.

Services aimed to connect new arrivals to communities should focus on building the capacity of newly arrived communities to work together toward common goals, promote their culture to Australian society in a positive way and welcome and assist new humanitarian arrivals. Appropriate SGP services may include:

• consulting with communities and assisting them to develop plans to help address their needs

• assisting entrants to access local community activities, such as local sports and social
clubs, organisations such as school parent associations, parents and citizens groups
• supporting new and establishing communities to provide support to their community and become more involved in the wider Australian community

• advising entrants about opportunities to become involved in volunteering

• referring new entrants to existing support groups to decrease social isolation and increase interaction with other communities (eg cultural/historical excursions, multicultural cooking groups, men’s sheds etc)

• assisting people interested in participating in their community to identify community issues and services as they relate to their interests and capabilities

• providing mentoring to potential community leaders on leadership and advocacy skills and incorporation, meeting procedures, record keeping and financial accountability requirements for government funding.

These examples may be appropriate as part of service types: community coordination and development and support for ethno-specific communities.
Conceptual framework for understanding settlement outcomes

The following diagram provides a conceptual framework for understanding settlement outcomes. It includes both systemic indicators, which are important for the design and targeting of government policies and programs, and life outcome indicators. These are used to identify the issues that need to be addressed overall to achieve effective settlement outcomes. These key settlement dimensions are interrelated and should not be considered in isolation in the achievement of successful settlement.

Key Settlement Indicators
- English Proficiency
- Participation in education and training
- Participation in community life (e.g., school, sports)
- Citizenship
- Employment circumstances
- Level of income
- Level of debt
- Job satisfaction
- Satisfaction with accommodation
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Self-esteem
- Relationships
- Access to transport
- Access and use of community and government services
- Source of income
- Ability to make life choices
- Gender equality
- Sense of belonging in Australia
- Sense of being treated well by the local community
- Level of discrimination and cultural religious expression

Demographic Attributes
- Country of Birth
- Gender
- Age
- Marital Status
- Family status
- Education level
- Years of schooling
- Work experience
- Length of time in Australia