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## New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy

The New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (the Strategy) is a whole-of-government approach to delivering improved refugee resettlement outcomes so that refugees more quickly achieve self-sufficiency, social integration and independence. The Strategy was approved by the New Zealand Government in 2012.

### Strategy outcomes

The overarching outcome for the Strategy is:

Refugees are participating fully and integrated socially and economically as soon as possible so that they are living independently, undertaking the same responsibilities and exercising the same rights as other New Zealanders and have a strong sense of belonging to their own community and to New Zealand.

This outcome is supported by the following five integration outcomes:

- *Self-sufficiency*: all working-age refugees are in paid work or are supported by a family member in paid work
- *Housing*: refugees live independently of government housing assistance in homes that are safe, secure, healthy and affordable
- *Education*: refugees' English language skills enable them to participate in education and achieve qualifications, and support them to participate in daily life
- *Health and wellbeing*: refugees and their families enjoy healthy, safe and independent lives
- *Participation*: refugees actively participate in New Zealand life and have a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand.

### Success indicators and target

Progress in improving the integration outcomes is measured annually against seven success indicators and one target (Education) approved by the Government. Baseline data has been established as a basis for assessing subsequent progress.

#### *Self-sufficiency*

- Increased proportion of working-age refugees in paid employment
- Reduced proportion of working-age refugees receiving unemployment related benefits

#### *Housing*

- Reduced proportion receiving housing assistance after two years and five years in New Zealand



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### *Education*

- Proportion of refugee school leavers receiving the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 after five years or more in the New Zealand education system

### *Health and wellbeing*

- Refugees' utilisation of general practitioner services
- Refugees' access to mental health services
- Children of Quota refugees receiving age-appropriate immunisations

## **Strategy implementation**

The implementation of the Strategy is an inter-agency commitment. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) coordinates this work. The Strategy is being implemented progressively from 2013 and has been applied in the first instance to Quota refugees. The priorities for implementation are determined by the Senior Officials Group representing key agencies and are approved by the Skilled and Safe Workplaces Chief Executives Group.

Below are some of the key projects that have been implemented since 2013.

### **Mix of services to support settlement**

In 2013/14 the following changes were made to the mix of services provided to Quota refugees to support improved refugee settlement outcomes.

- **Improved off-shore orientation** to better inform refugees about life in New Zealand, the resettlement challenges they will face, the expectations of them and the resettlement support they will receive. A DVD on settlement in New Zealand was developed for refugees settling in New Zealand and additional information relating to the region in which they will be settled. See the following Immigration New Zealand link: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/audiences/supporting-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/experiences-of-refugees-in-new-zealand>.
- **Enhanced six-week reception programme** at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC) in Auckland to place greater emphasis on supporting refugees to achieve employment, social integration and independence. The revised reception programme includes settlement planning and orientation to New Zealand life; English language; and preparing working-age adults for employment and children for school. It also provides health and mental health assessment, initial treatment and health promotion.
- **Enhanced support in the initial settlement phase** (first 12 months in the community) to include an orientation programme complementing the reception programme at the MRRC and linking refugees to the mainstream services they



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require to support their settlement (e.g. English language, education, health and community support).

- **Better information sharing** with service providers and refugee community leaders about the composition of the quota intake to enable high-level settlement preparations to occur earlier in the regions

### **Mapping of English Language Learning**

In 2014/15 the Ministry of Education and the Tertiary Education Commission conducted work to map the English language provision of former refugees to align delivery with needs. This work included consultation with former refugee communities and stakeholders in the refugee resettlement sector on the level and location of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision and the barriers to accessing ESOL in each region where refugees are settled in New Zealand.

### **Language Assistance Services Project**

In 2016 MBIE commissioned [a review](#) of interpreting services and other language assistance in New Zealand, which made a number of recommendations to improve access to public services for people from non-English speaking backgrounds through language assistance services. Government agreed to implement these recommendations as part of a multi-year work programme with the following deliverables:

- Development of inter-agency Language Assistance Services Guidelines establishing agency best practice for the planning, funding and delivery of public services to clients from non-English speaking backgrounds
- Common purchasing arrangements for language assistance services across the public sector agencies established through a procurement process and supported by a business case
- Identifying and implementing minimum professional standards for interpreters and translators working across government including accreditation and transitional arrangements.
- A Language Assistance Portal to provide a single depository of information for language assistance services in New Zealand.

### **Driver Training Programme**

The Driver Training Programme was established in 2013/14 and provides driving lessons and driver training enabling former refugees to obtain their Restricted Licence to then support employment and participation in the community.

The programme was initially piloted in Hamilton and extended to Palmerston North and Nelson in 2014/15 and to Wellington in 2016/17. The programme is expected to be further extended in the future to Auckland and Dunedin.



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In 2017/18 the programme will be further strengthened to include transportation modules (Road Safety, Public Transport and Driving in New Zealand) within the reception programme at the MRRC. This will be supplemented with additional modules included with in the community orientation programme covering local transport, cycling and drivers licencing. There will also be the opportunity for former refugees to obtain their learners licence in the community with learning delivered as part of the advanced English language programme.

### **Improving Refugee Employment Outcomes**

Employment is recognised as a key part of settlement through its contribution to self-sufficiency, providing networks and opportunities for greater participation and as an enabler for other integration outcomes.

The Improving Refugee Employment Outcomes Project is an inter-agency project which seeks to accelerate refugees' transition to employment and ease some of the barriers to employment refugees face. Its purpose is to use strategic relationships with employers to provide refugees with greater employment paths opportunities aligned to their skills, developing a set of services to support refugees to connect to employments paths and opportunities relevant to their skills and connecting refugee youth to relevant education and training opportunities aligned to their aspirations.

The first phase of the work will be to develop:

- A framework to support strategic engagement with employers that increases the opportunities for meaningful and sustained employment, role progression and life-long skills development for refugees
- A coordinated set of services that both prepares and connects former refugees to meaningful and sustained employment and/or training opportunities.