

Fact Sheet

Migration and Settlement

AVERT
FAMILY VIOLENCE



**Collaborative Responses in
the Family Law System**



An Australian Government Initiative

Australian
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An Australian Government Initiative





Fact Sheet: Migration and Settlement

Australia's Immigration Program

Australia's Immigration Program has two components:

- Migration Program for skilled and family migrants
- Humanitarian Program for refugees and others in refugee-like situations.

The Humanitarian Program comprises an offshore component for the resettlement of people currently overseas and an onshore component for those people already in Australia who seek Australia's protection.

Migration Program for skilled and family migrants

The Skill stream of Australia's permanent Migration Program provides for over 60 skilled visa subclasses, each with their own characteristics and criteria leading to permanent residency in Australia. Most skilled visas require applicants to pass the General Skilled Migration (GSM) points test. Applicants are then selected on a number of criteria including their age, English language ability, qualifications, work experience, nominations or sponsorships, and their nominated skilled occupation¹.

The migration to Australia of people with qualifications and relevant work experience helps to address specific skill shortages in Australia and enhances the size and skill level of the Australian labour force.

Characteristics of Skilled Migrants:

The following points broadly represent the key characteristics of skilled settlers²:

- Skilled settlers arriving during 2007-08 were mainly born in the UK, India, China and South Africa. Skilled migrants exhibit a younger age profile than the

¹ Department of Immigration and Citizenship Fact Sheet 24 - *Overview of Skilled Migration to Australia*
http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/24overview_skilled.htm

² DIAC Migration Program Statistics, viewed 22 October 2008, <<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/statistical-info/visa-grants/>>.



Australian resident population. From 1997-98 to 2007-08, 57% of skilled arrivals (including dependents) were aged 29 years and under.

- Skilled migrants often settle in Australia with their dependents (generally these include any accompanying persons, their spouse, or children).
- Professionals comprise the largest group of recent skilled settlers and are followed by Technicians and Trades Workers.

The Offshore Resettlement Component

The offshore resettlement component comprises two categories of permanent visa. These are:

- Refugee** - for people who are subject to persecution in their home country, who are typically outside their home country and are in need of resettlement. The term “refugee” applies to *any person who has fled his/her country of origin due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to that country. (Article 1, The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees)*
 - The majority of applicants who are considered under this category are identified and referred by the UNHCR to Australia for resettlement. The Refugee category includes the Refugee, In-country Special Humanitarian, Emergency Rescue and Woman at Risk sub-classes.
- Special Humanitarian Program (SHP)** for people outside their home country who are subject to substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights in their home country. A proposer who is an Australian citizen, permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen, or an organisation that is based in Australia, must support applications for entry under the SHP.



Migration and the Process of Intercultural Adaptation

Intercultural adaptation experienced by individuals entering new and unfamiliar cultures involves a range of identity change and challenges that are confronted in trying to settle into a new environment. These challenges may include:

- Differences in core beliefs, values, and situational norms between the home and host cultures
- Loss of the valued images of the home culture. In other words, familiar images and symbols have vanished
- Newcomers sense a social incompetence in responding to the new setting appropriately and effectively.

Culture Shock is a common consequence of cultural adaptation and produces an identity disequilibrium state which can bring about adaptive transformations on affective, cognitive and behavioural levels.

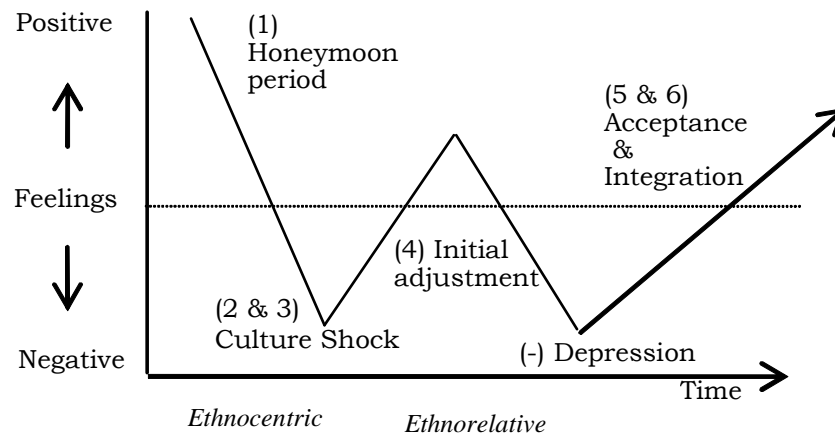
Culture shock involves:

- A sense of identity loss and identity deprivation
- Identity strain as a result of the effort required to make the necessary psychological adaptation
- Identity rejection by members of the new culture
- Identity confusion – role ambiguity and unpredictability
- Identity impotence as a result of not being able to cope with the new environment.

How culture shock is managed will determine the adaptive process and outcome for newcomers.



Diagram: Culture shock to acculturation³



Acculturation

Acculturation refers to the changes that result from the sustained first hand contact between members of different ethnic and cultural groups. Refugees or immigrants coming into any new cultural environment are likely to adopt a range of identity strategies for dealing with the acculturative stress that emerges in the settlement process. These include:

Traditional oriented/separation

This approach favours the maintenance of ethnic tradition while attaching low significance to host culture values.

Bicultural oriented/integrative

This approach favours the maintenance of ethnic tradition as well as beginning to move towards acceptance of larger society practices from the new environment. Research shows that this group has the lowest psychological problems.

Assimilation option

In this approach the individual attaches low significance to their ethnic values and adopts the larger cultural practices of their new environment.

³ Levine, D & Adelman, R 1993 *Beyond Language: Cross-Cultural Communication* New Jersey: Prentice Hall



Marginalisation

In this approach individuals lose ethnic/psychological contact with both their ethnic groups and the larger society.

Issues for Refugee and Humanitarian Entrants

In the **last 50 years, approximately 400,000** people have entered Australia under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program.

Refugees have escaped situations that have endangered their lives and their psychological health and wellbeing. Refugees are seeking a new life in Australia not because they have chosen to, but out of the necessity to be protected. They have been forced to leave their country under extreme circumstances and therefore have not had the opportunity, either psychologically or financially, to prepare for life in any other country.

They have often lost family, seen and experienced atrocities and spent years in refugee camps or in transition between countries and have suffered extreme trauma. They are unlikely to have had the opportunity to pack any belongings or farewell family and friends. They usually have very little information about the country or society where they are resettling.

Phases of the Refugee Experience

Four discreet phases of experience have been identified within the psychological and social challenges faced by refugees

- The pre-flight phase** - This is the period leading up to flight from the home country, including experiences of economic hardship, social disruption, physical violence and political oppression
- The flight phase** - This involves the experience of separation from home (and frequently family), and the dangers of passage itself to a country of first asylum
- The temporary settlement or asylum-seeking.** This may involve extended accommodation in a formal refugee camp or centre, where the routines of normal life are hard to establish and individuals are 'in limbo'
- Resettlement or repatriation** – when legal status is decided and either the tasks of adapting to and learning how to function fully within the new society commences OR facing a return to the home country



Common Themes Affecting Newly Arrived Refugee and Humanitarian Entrants

Common themes which affect Refugees and their communities include:

- Experiences of oppression and persecution
- Significantly high levels of trauma amongst individuals and the community as a whole
- They have not chosen to migrate to Australia but are in exile from their country of origin
- They have generally received less than adequate or no health care leading up to their arrival in Australia
- They are often in a process of grieving for family, country, culture and friends
- There is a strong lack of understanding in the way in which social systems function in Australia
- They are no longer part of the dominant culture and their communities usually have poor infrastructure and resourcing, giving them very little political or economic influence
- They generally have a low level of socio-economic status including no guarantee of work and minimal English language skills.

Government Departments and other service providers need to be aware that the seemingly harmless and innocuous people, situations, events, behaviours and standard operating procedures of Australian services, that appear self explanatory, may be terrifying and confusing to survivors of torture and racist violence.

Some behaviours and circumstances that may bring on the memory of torture and trauma include:

- Doors being locked, doors without locks
- Reminders of interrogative questioning e.g. taking notes, using tape recorders, questions being repeated, shutting doors, people coming and going without explanation
- Having to wait without an explanation, being left without an explanation



- Being asked too many questions
- People in uniform or white coats
- People wearing dark glasses or gloves
- Sudden loud noises.

See website for The Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma. <http://www.fasstt.org.au/home/index.php>