



victorian refugee
health network

Refugee and Asylum Seeker Health and Wellbeing in Victoria

Looking back... looking forward...


Refugee health policy & service development
victorian refugee health network



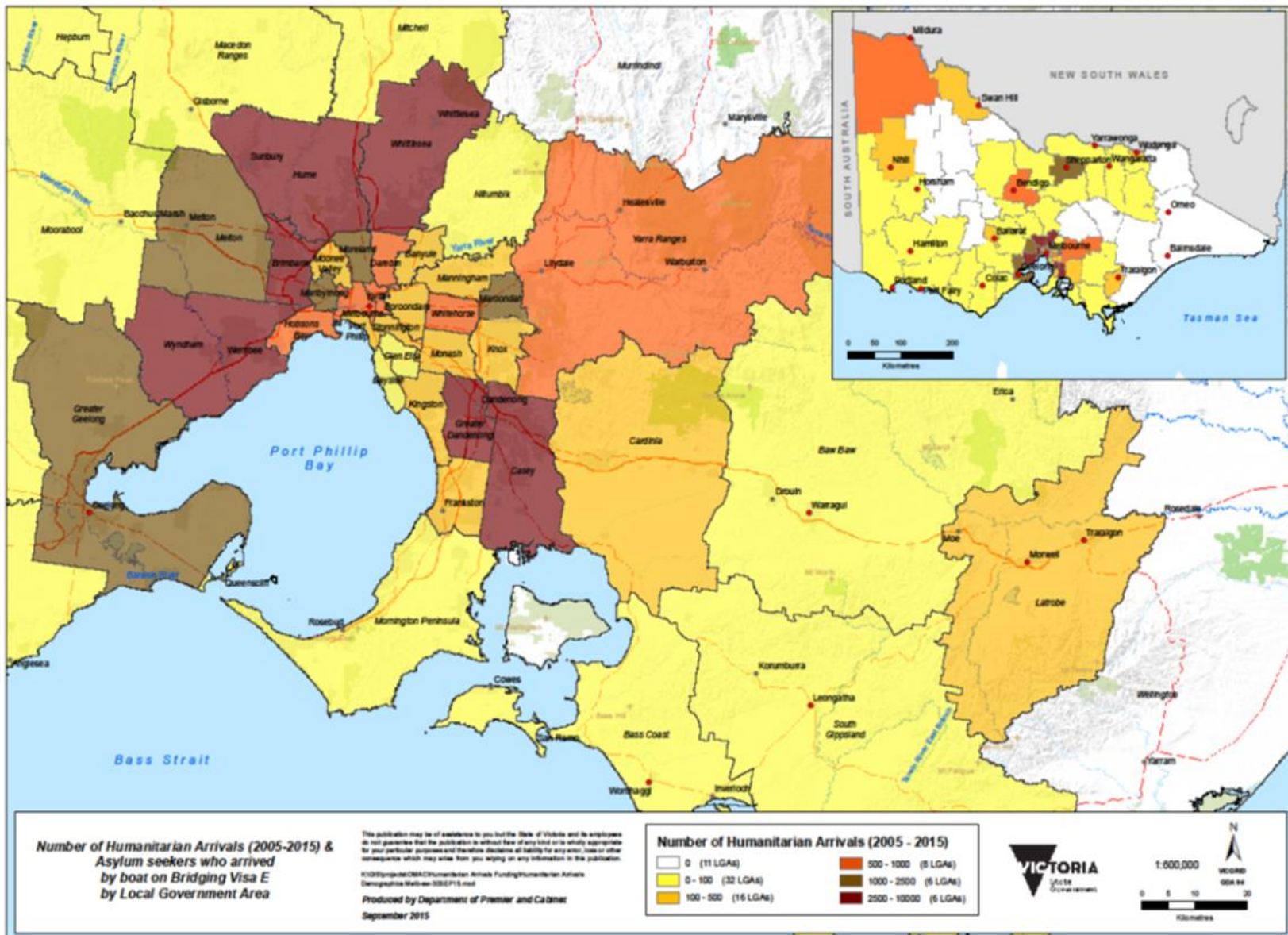


What will I be talking about

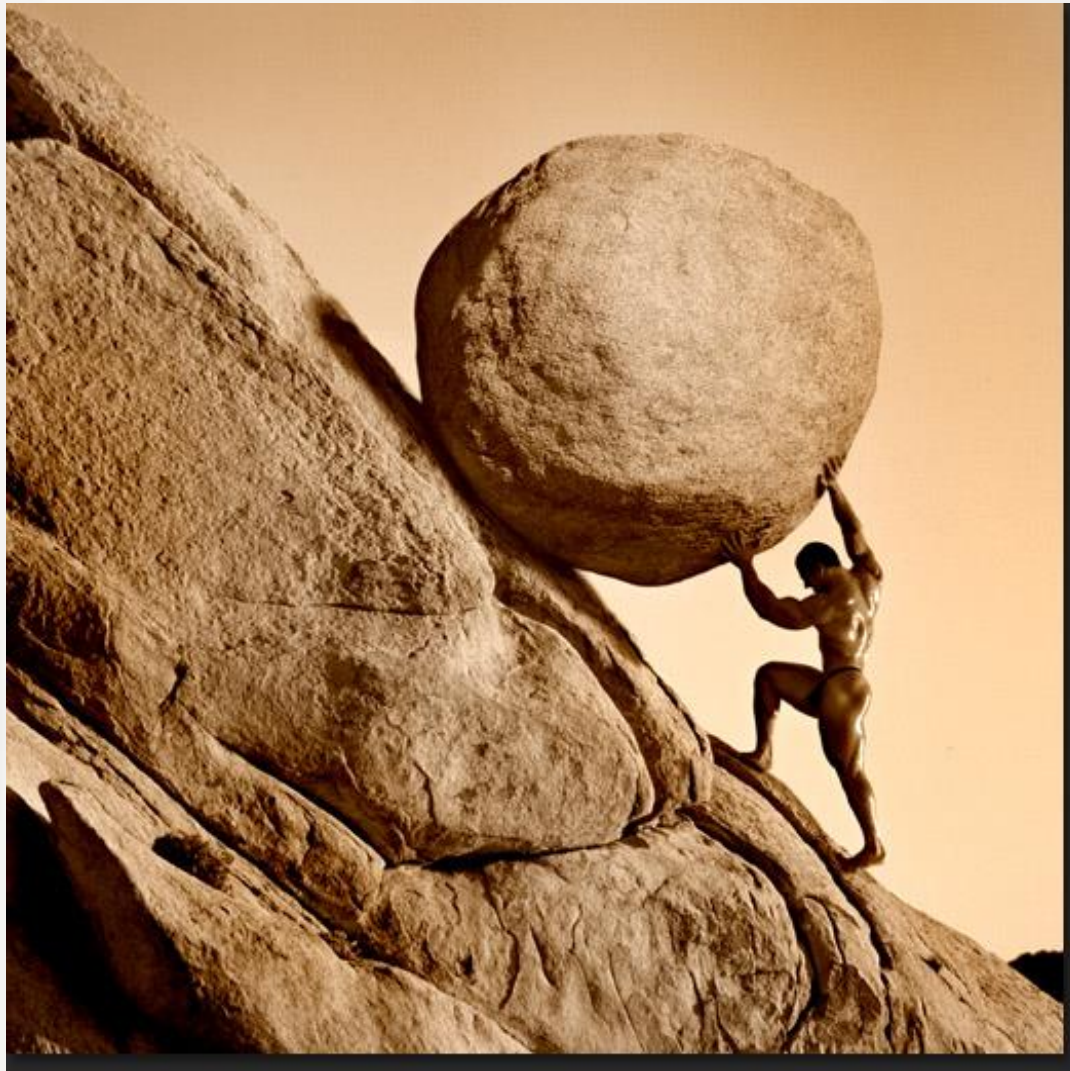
- Settlement patterns in Victoria
- Building blocks – where are we now?
- Examples of where changes in systems and policies brought better care for refugees – how did we get here?
- Challenges – where to from here?
- Questions and discussion



Current refugee and asylum seeker settlement



Development of a sector – not just the work of individuals...



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Building blocks – where are we now?

- Thoughtful and skilled service development
- Documenting good practice to inform policy as well as practice
- Development of a policy platform
- Underpinned by innovation, funding commitments, collaborative practice & partnerships



Collaboration & partnerships



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Collaboration & partnerships

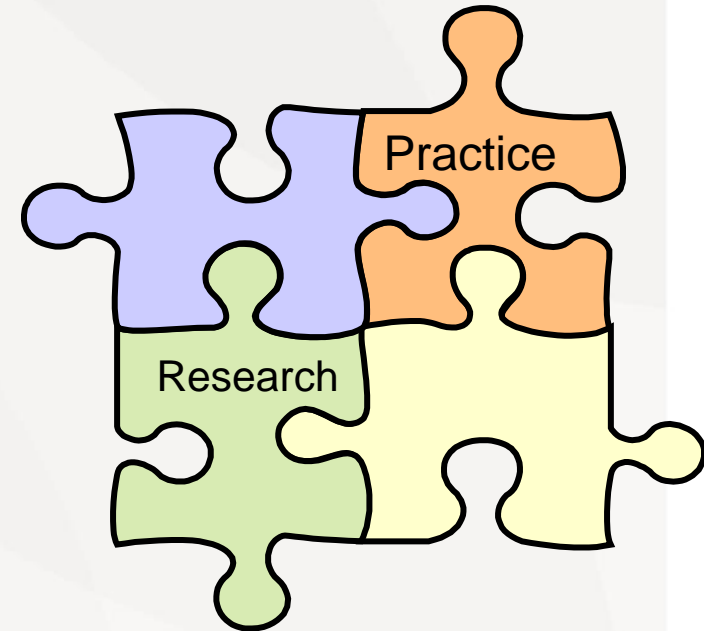


Factors of our success – how did we get here?



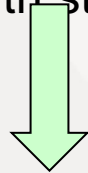
The foundations...

- **1987** Foundation House established
- **1996** Western Region Health Centre establishes first refugee health nurse position
- **1997** Refugee special needs dental program established
- **1998** Foundation House releases first comprehensive guide to refugee health care, followed by more key resources in 2000 and 2002
- **1999** Refugee health and GP development program commences
- **2001** Immigrant health clinics commence at inner Melbourne hospitals. RMH with research component.
- **2001** Western Region Health Centre Refugee Health Model including Refugee Health Nurse evaluated

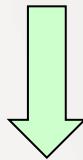


Early Development of a sector

2003 Minister for Health endorses development of first refugee health strategy for Victoria



2004 DHS and ANZ Trustees fund Foundation House to develop *Towards a health strategy for refugees and asylum seekers in Victoria*

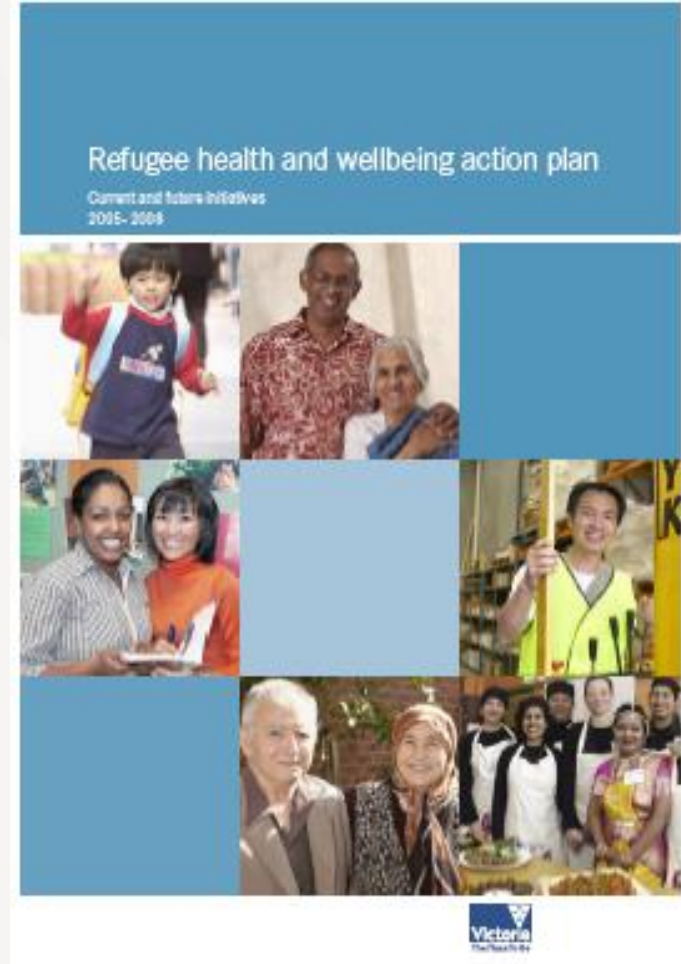
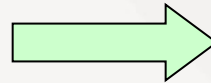
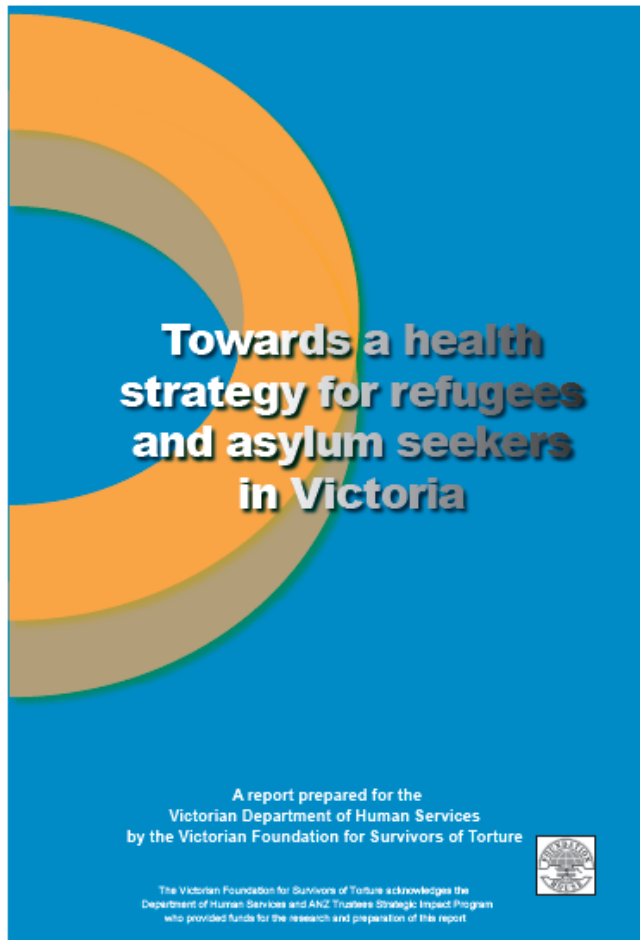


2005 Victorian Refugee Health & Wellbeing Action Plan 2005-08 launched



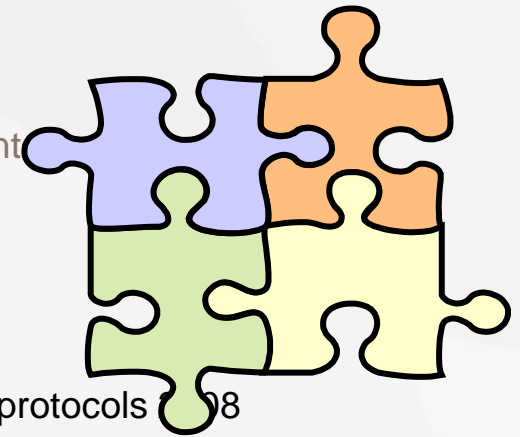


Victorian Refugee Health & Wellbeing Action Plan



An example...Support for GPs and Refugee Health Nurses

- **2005** Refugee Health Nurse Program commences with 4.5 nurses across state and expanded incrementally
- **2005** Primary Care Partnerships funded for local service development
- **2005** Training program for Refugee Health Nurses established
- **2006** Electronic refugee health assessment form for GPs
- **2007** New edition of Promoting Refugee Health Guide
- **2007** HealthWest PCP produces care pathways, guidelines & referral protocols
Victorian Refugee Health Network and website launched
- **2008** Increased funding for RHN program
- **2010** Medicare locals establish training programs for Gps with support of RHNs
- **2013** Increased funding for RHN program includes extra funding for allied health positions in CHCs / 16 CHCs with approx 50 nurses and 20 allied health staff
- **2016** PHNs provide funding for ongoing training and upskilling of GPs and bi cultural worker initiative
- **2016** Settlement Health Co-ordinator pilot funded
- **2016** Refugee Nurses Australia RNA
- Underpinned by the Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and Refugee Health Network



Victoria's Action Plans

Refugee health and wellbeing action plan

Current and future initiatives
2008-2008

Refugee health and wellbeing action plan
2008-2010

Department of Health

health

The Victorian refugee and
asylum seeker health
action plan 2014-2018
June 2014



Victorian refugee health and wellbeing action plan
Consultation summary



Consultation Summary

- Advisory Committee to guide the consultation process
- •33 targeted meetings and 8 forums with health providers
- •Consultations with 8 community groups
- •Regional consultations in Shepparton and Geelong
- •Consultation findings released – focusing on health issues, social determinants and key enablers of care:
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/diversity/refugee.htm>



Partnership approaches

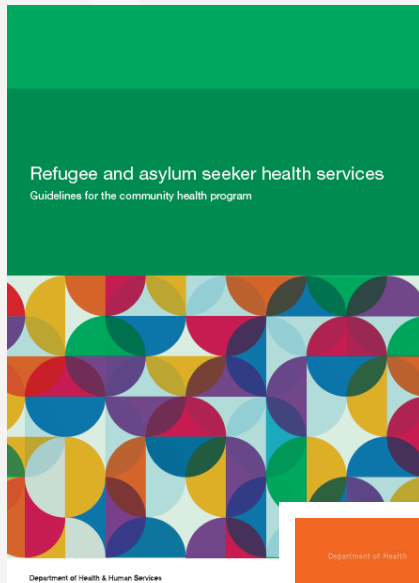
Government bodies	The Office for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship
	The Victorian Multicultural Commission
	Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Border Protection , Department of Social Services and Department of Health
	Local government and the Municipal Association of Victoria
Health, human services and settlement services	The Victorian Refugee Health Network
	The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (Foundation House)
	Specialised health and human service providers – such as from Refugee Minor Program , Refugee Health Program , Refugee Health Fellows Program and Specialist Homelessness and Family Violence services
	Refugee settlement services – through AMES Australia
	Asylum seeker support services providers through Status Resolution Support Services – such as AMES Australia , Red Cross and Life Without Barriers
	Peak multicultural and cultural diversity agencies – such as Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH), Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) and Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC), InTouch Multicultural Centre on Family Violence , Multicultural Sexual Health Network , Victorian Transcultural Mental Health (VTMH)
	Refugee and asylum seeker advocacy groups – such as the Network of Asylum Seeker Agencies Victoria (NASAVIC), Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) and Refugee Council of Australia (RCoA)
	Community health and primary health organisations - such as Primary Health Networks and Primary Care Partnerships
	Research partnerships – such as with the Southern Academic Primary Care Research Unit and Murdoch Children's Research Institute
	Language services providers – Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS), Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service (VITS) and ONCALL Interpreters and Translators Australia



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Victorian Government's longstanding and ongoing commitment

- Special access arrangements
- \$11 million per annum in specialised programs
- \$10.9 million new funding for Syrian & Iraqi refugee health & wellbeing
- New Language Services Policy
- Three previous Actions Plans
- Partnership with the Victorian Refugee Health Network



Victorian government services for refugee and asylum seeker health

- Refugee health program at community health centres
- •Refugee health fellows program: Positions at RCH, RMH, Dandenong
- •Immigrant and refugee health clinics: across Victoria
- •Torture and trauma counselling
- •Catch-up immunisation program for adults
- •High dose Vitamin D initiative
- •Priority of access and fees policies



Victoria's access initiatives

- People arrive on different visas with varying entitlements, services & supports.
- Some access barriers relate to temporary residency status, eg people seeking asylum & refugees on temporary visas.
- DHHS aims to provide the widest eligibility possible for this client group through access arrangements such as:
 - Priority of access, fee waivers & inclusion in eligibility criteria
 - Community Health
 - Dental
 - Public hospital services for asylum seekers
 - Ambulance
 - Optometry
 - Homelessness services and family violence services
 - Other eg public transport concession & kindergarten fee subsidy



Key DHHS resources

- New Language Services Policy – and fact sheets
- Regional DHHS Fact Sheet on refugee and asylum seeker health and wellbeing
- Community Health Guidelines for refugee and asylum seeker health services – 2015
- Asylum Seeker Access Guide and Community Detention Guidelines
- Hospital access policy and Homelessness Factsheet
- Previous action plans – 2014, 2008, 2005
- All resources available on the [DHHS website](#)
- Sector resources: [Victorian Refugee Health Network website](#)

New DHHS Language Services Policy

- New Language Services Policy
 - Policy
 - Guidelines – *How to work with interpreters and translators*
- Interpreting services
 - Credit Lines – new Refugee Health Programs credit line
- Health Translations Directory
- More information on these topics and more can be found at:
 - [www. www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/populations/cald-](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/populations/cald-health)





Victoria's approach to refugee and asylum seeker health care

Figure 8: Refugee and asylum seeker healthcare journey





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- Formed in 2007 to bring health and community services together to be more accessible and responsive to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Reference Group, working groups, forums
- Website: www.refugeehealthnetwork.org.au



Victorian Refugee Health Network

Aims :

- Build the capacity of the Victorian health sector to respond to the needs of people from refugee backgrounds, including people seeking asylum.
- Support services to be more accessible to people from refugee backgrounds.
- Improve service coordination for recent arrivals and those with more complex needs.



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Victorian Refugee Health Network

- Vehicle for sharing practice and emerging issues.
- Collaborative development of best practice resources for the sector: e.g. [guides](#), [factsheets](#)
- Communication with Commonwealth and state government departments about trends in refugee and asylum seeker health.
- Dissemination of information to the sector: e.g. [e-bulletin](#), [website](#), forums.



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Refugee and asylum seeker health services in
Victoria: www.refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/refer

Victorian Refugee Health Network

approach:

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www.refugeehealthnetwork.org.au

refugeehealthnetwork.org.au

Search

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Welcome to the Victorian Refugee Health Network. The Network brings health and community services together to be more accessible and responsive to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Home About Contact e-Bulletin Asylum Seeker Health Rural & Regional Professional Development Publications Guides

welcoming new partners

Learn
What is refugee health and why is it important?
[Read More](#)

Engage
Get involved in the refugee health sector. Find out more about the Victorian Refugee Health Network's activities. Link into professional networks. Meet current researchers in the refugee health field.
[Read More](#)

Clinical Quicklinks
Fast links to the most useful refugee health resources.
[Read More](#)

Refer
Find contact information for a service in your area.
[Read More](#)

Library
Search for articles, policy documents, practice resources and refugee client information.
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About refugee health
Why Focus on Refugee Health?

Recently uploaded
Medicare renewal for asylum seekers
Mental Health in Australia: Read More

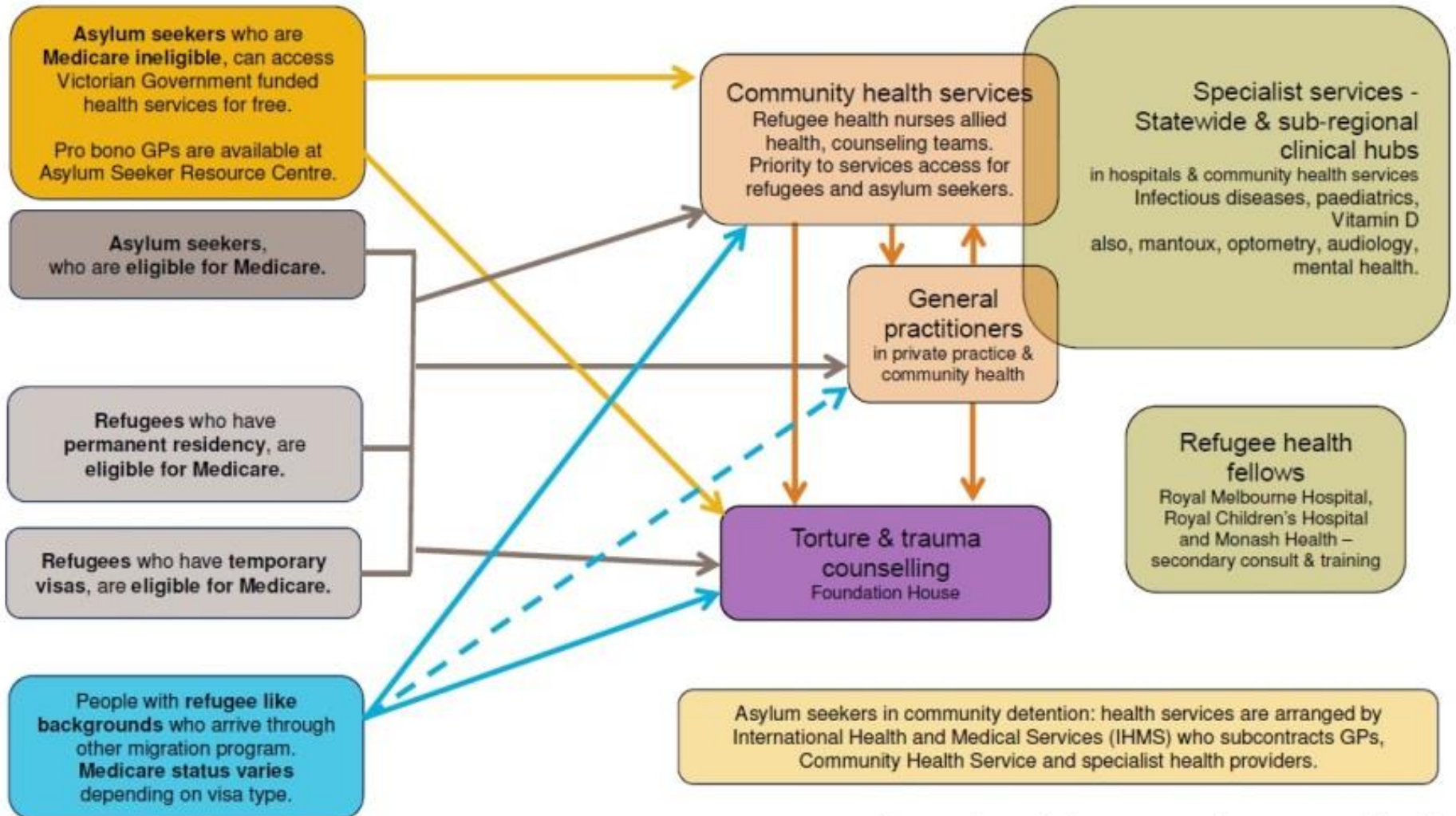
Tags
Access Antenatal care
Arabic Language

<http://refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/library/>

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Victorian Refugee Health Network Library. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu with links for Home, About, Contact, e-Bulletin, Asylum Seeker Health, Rural & Regional, Professional Development, Publications, and Guides. Below the navigation menu are five buttons: Learn, Engage, Clinical Quicklinks, Refer, and Library. The Library section is active, displaying a grid of topic categories: asylum seekers, mental health, oral health, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, domestic violence, children and adolescents, language services, and maternal and child health. To the right of the grid is a search form with a search bar, three dropdown menus for Categories, Tags, and Type of Content/Information, and a Search button.

Local reports and resources about refugee and asylum seeker health

Refugee and asylum seeker health services in Victoria



Common themes

- Strong focus on building active partnerships between specialised and mainstream services, policy advisors and researchers
- Dialogue between refugee-background communities and service providers
- Documentation of service gaps and recommendations
- Developing and trialling new initiatives locally that can be scaled up
- Program evaluation and review – often self generated
- Research partnerships
- Professional and organisational development to support roll out of programs and projects



Future trends and challenges



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Refugee Intake is growing

- Refugee intake has averaged around 4,000 per year to Victoria (approximately 13,750 to Australia) - Victoria typically receives 33% of national intake

Increased annual refugee intake

- Increased Humanitarian Programme will commence in 2017-18 with an additional 2,500 refugee places nationally, rising to an additional 5,000 places above current levels from 2018-19 onwards
 - In Victoria, this equates to:
 - 5,200 per annum in 2017-18 (30% increase on current levels)
 - 6,000 from 2018-19 (50% ongoing increase on current levels)

One-off Syrian and Iraqi refugee intake

- Additional national intake of 12,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees
- Around 3,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees have settled in Victoria



Asylum seekers in the Victorian community

- Nationally, there are around 25,252 asylum seekers in the community on Bridging Visas awaiting refugee determination (including 3,925 children)
- **Over 10,000 people are currently seeking asylum in Victoria** - on Bridging Visa E = 38% of national intake
- Visa processing of refugee claims has recently recommenced. Over the next 3-5 years, they will follow one of three pathways:
 1. Granted protection and opt for a 3 year [Temporary Protection Visa](#);
 2. Granted protection and opt for a 5 year [Safe Haven Enterprise Visa](#) which requires them to work/study in regional areas for at least 3.5 years to be eligible to apply for a number of permanent visa pathways; or
 3. Found not to be owed protection and may remain in the community to legally challenge this decision or may be re-detained or return to country of origin. Commonwealth supports are limited for this group.



• **People in detention in Australia**

- 1,351 people nationally in Australian detention centres (204 in Victoria)
- 568 asylum seekers in community detention nationally (204 in Victoria)

Future trends in settlement location

- Some key drivers of settlement location: family and community connections, employment and study, affordable housing, proximity to services and visa conditions
- Trends for different cohorts:
 - 1. Syrian and Iraqi refugee intake** – settling in current areas of high Syrian and Iraqi settlement – eg North West Melbourne (Hume, Darebin, Moreland, Whittlesea, Wyndham, Brimbank & Melton)
 - 2. General refugee settlement** – guided by current settlement (but also higher Syrian/Iraqi settlement expected through the general program)
 - 3. Asylum seekers on Bridging Visas** – over the next three to five years people may move from metropolitan areas to regional areas to work or study once they are granted temporary refugee status, to be eligible to apply for a number of permanent visa pathways. Victorian regional postcodes opted in for Victoria are now publicly available [here](#)

2016-2017 State Budget support

- \$10.91 million over 4 years for health & human services to support rising Syrian & Iraqi refugee settlement in north metro Melbourne
- Includes:
- Settlement Health Coordinators (nurses) working with AMES Australia
- New paediatric Refugee Health Fellow in Northern metro areas providing clinics in Craigieburn
- Targeted catch-up immunisation program
- Mental health and psychosocial support programs
- Refugee Minor Program casework support
- Language services including interpreting, translated resources and a new innovation grants program for hospital interpreting



For further questions or support



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Victorian Refugee Health Network

www.refugeehealthnetwork.org.au

Diversity queries

diversity@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Diversity in Health website

www.health.vic.gov.au/diversity/



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