

OFFICIAL**Key Brief Number: IG-11**

**Home Affairs Portfolio
Department of Home Affairs
Supplementary Estimates Hearing – November 2024**

KEY BRIEF**Topic: Humanitarian Crisis Response and Visa Pathways****Responsible Deputy:** Dr Emma Cassar PSM, Associate Secretary Immigration**Key Top Lines**

- As part of the response to the Hamas-Israel conflict, the Australian Government is making available, on a case by case basis, a temporary humanitarian visa pathway to Palestinian and Israeli temporary visa holders currently in Australia.
 - This is the same offer made to the Ukrainian cohort.
 - The case-by-case approach provides the Minister with discretion to ensure that offers are only made to individuals who have cleared ASIO security checks.
- The Minister for Home Affairs has met with representatives from 12 Palestinian family groups (57 individuals), where a pathway to a 786 Temporary (Humanitarian Concern) visa was discussed.
 - The Minister has subsequently made formal offers to family groups who indicated their interest in receiving an offer of temporary humanitarian stay.
 - As at 18 October 2024, 11 of these family groups (51 individuals) have accepted the offer of temporary humanitarian stay.
- Meeting with the Minister is not a requirement for individuals to be made an offer for the temporary humanitarian visa pathway.
 - Offers of a temporary humanitarian stay will be made on a case-by-case basis. No decision has been made by the Government in relation to the entire cohort.
- The Minister for Home Affairs has indicated that pathways to a permanent visa will be considered during the life of the temporary stay visa.

Handling Notes:

- Andrew Kiley, FAS Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division is the lead witness.
- Sneha Chatterjee, A/g FAS Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs is the lead on questions about direct support assistance grants.

Key Points

- The temporary humanitarian visa pathway is a two-stage visa process that involves applying first for a subclass 449 Humanitarian Stay (Temporary) visa, followed by a subclass 786 Temporary (Humanitarian Concern) visa which will be valid for three years.
- To be granted a visa, individuals must meet all visa legal requirements, including health, character and security criteria, the same criteria as any other visa applicant.

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Clearing Officer: Mr Andrew Kiley, First Assistant Secretary, Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division

OFFICIAL**Key Brief Number: IG-11**

- All available information is considered by officers in making these assessments.
- Security checks may be repeated at any time along a person's journey to Australia, including at the time of visa grant, while they hold a visa outside Australia, or once they arrive in Australia.
- The temporary humanitarian stay pathway will enable individuals to receive a number of social and settlement supports, including:
 - Some income support including Special Benefit Payments and Parental Leave Pay;
 - work and study rights;
 - supports provided under the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP), the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support program (SETS), and the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP); and
 - Medicare access for subclass 786 visa holders only.
- Palestinians on temporary visas assessed as being in financial hardship may be eligible for emergency financial assistance through \$3 million in Government funding to the Australian Red Cross.

Interaction with Protection and other visa applications

- Individuals who are granted an offer of temporary humanitarian stay may not be able to apply for other Australian visas in the future.
 - Persons who hold or have held a subclass 449 Humanitarian Stay (Temporary) visa and have not departed Australia, are prevented from making a valid application for another visa under the *Migration Act 1958*.
- Individuals who are offered a temporary humanitarian stay cannot be granted a protection visa, regardless of whether they have already lodged an application.
 - Lodging a Protection visa application does not guarantee stay in Australia. The longest cases have taken up to eight years to finalise.
- Protection visa applications will be assessed in due course, noting decision makers need to be supported by settled country information to ensure sound decision making, as a standard part of the protection visa assessment process.
- The Department recommends that individuals consult with a registered migration agent or legal practitioner about their visa options and specific requirements.

Medicare related issues and health checks

- As 449 visa holders are not eligible for Medicare, the Department is proactively working to minimise any gap in Medicare coverage for individuals who already had Medicare access prior to accepting the offer of temporary humanitarian stay.
- Financial hardship and associated inability to pay for mandatory Immigration Medical Examinations IMEs was identified as a fundamental barrier to individuals accessing this pathway. Costs for those in financial hardship will be covered through the Humanitarian Settlement Program.

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OFFICIAL**Key Brief Number: IG-11****Key Data and Statistics***Andrew Kiley – First Assistant Secretary, Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division***Onshore Humanitarian Visa Pathway – Palestinian nationals (as at 18 October 2024)**

Offers of temporary humanitarian stay – processing stage	
Offers of temporary humanitarian stay made <i>(Minister has signed off on the submission agreeing to make a formal offer and lifted the 91K bar)</i>	57
Number of individuals who have accepted the offer <i>(have commenced a subclass 449 Humanitarian Stay (Temporary) visa application)</i>	57
Number of individuals who have been granted a subclass 449 Humanitarian Stay (Temporary) visa	23
Number of individuals who have been granted a subclass 786 Temporary (Humanitarian Concern) visa	<5
Individuals who have declined the offer of temporary humanitarian stay <i>(After Minister has signed off on the submission agreeing to make a formal offer and lifted the 91K bar)</i>	0
Individuals who have been refused a visa after being offered temporary humanitarian stay	0

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SB24-001020

Page 3 of 4
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OFFICIAL**Key Brief Number: IG-11****Subclass 866 Protection visa data for Palestinian and Israeli nationals from 7 October 2023 to 30 September 2024[^]**

	Palestinian nationals	Israeli nationals	TOTAL
Protection visa applications lodged	1087	53	1140
Protection visa applications on-hand	1123*	45*	1168
Protection visas granted	8	0	8

** Onhand as at 30 September**[^] These figures include Palestinian and Israeli nationals who may have already been in Australia prior to 7 October 2023***Consultation**

The Chief Data Officer, or their delegate undertaking the Data Clearance function, has cleared the statistics contained within this brief.

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SB24-001020

Page 4 of 4
As at 21 October 2024

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OFFICIAL**Key Brief Number: IG-09**

**Home Affairs Portfolio
Department of Home Affairs
Supplementary Estimates Hearing – November 2024**

KEY BRIEF: Multicultural Grants**Responsible Deputy:** Dr Emma Cassar PSM, Associate Secretary Immigration**Key Top Lines**

- Delivery of the **\$25 million** grants package to address the social cohesion impacts arising from the conflict in the Middle East is well progressed.
 - o **\$16.84 million¹** is committed and in various stages of implementation.
 - o The remaining **\$5.85 million** is expected to be finalised by 31 December 2024.
 - o **\$2.31 million** is allocated for administration of the package.
- On 29 August 2024, Government announced a further **\$5.08 million** for Australian Palestinian-led community organisations to assist recent arrivals; and, for local community organisations to support young Muslim Australians impacted by the conflict and humanitarian crisis in Gaza.
 - o This funding will be provided to organisations with direct links to community and a demonstrated ability to provide immediate relief to the most affected cohorts.
 - o As at 30 September 2024, commitment has been made to 7 organisations totalling **\$4.17 million**.
 - o Government is still considering options for the remaining **\$0.83 million** of funding.
 - o **\$0.08 million** is allocated for administration of the package.
- On 5 October 2024, the Prime Minister announced \$25 million funding to support the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia.

Handling Notes:

- The lead witness for Multicultural Grants is Sneha Chatterjee, A/g First Assistant Secretary, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs Division (CMAD).
 - o The Office of Community Cohesion leads the coordination of the whole of government social cohesion measures package.
 - o CMAD leads the implementation of the \$25 million grants package for Australian Palestinian Muslim and Arab communities affected by the conflict.
 - o The Attorney General's Department is administering the \$25 million grant to the Executive Council of Australian Jewry Inc (ECAJ).
 - o The Department of Social Services (DSS) conducts grant processes on behalf of the Commonwealth.

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Clearing Officer: Dr Emma Cassar PSM, Associate Secretary Immigration

OFFICIAL**Key Brief Number: IG-09****Key Points****\$25 million social cohesion package to support Australian communities**

- On 19 October 2023, the then Minister for Home Affairs and the then Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, together with other relevant Ministers, jointly announced initiatives across government to address the social cohesion impacts of the conflict in the Middle East.
- The package included **\$25 million**, administered by the department, to support Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other communities affected by the Hamas-Israel conflict.
- As at 30 September 2024, over **\$16.84 million** has been committed, comprising:
 - **\$7.00 million** for national programs combatting racism, Islamophobia and reducing misinformation and disinformation;
 - **\$2.00 million** for national programs focusing on youth affected by the conflict;
 - **\$3.84 million** for local social cohesion projects; and
 - **\$4.00 million** for the Community Cohesion Support Program (CCSP) for community grassroots organisations, administered through Social Policy Group (SPG).
 - In September 2024, SPG finalised the CCSP.
 - 69 organisations have signed grant agreements for locally led grassroots projects totalling **\$3.180 million**.
 - As at 30 September 2024 the department has paid SPG **\$2.79 million** of their **\$4.00 million** grant.
- The remainder of the \$25 million package includes:
 - **\$5.60 million** for the Australian Palestinian, Muslim and Arab Communities (APMAC) Support Projects grant opportunity;
 - The round was open between 18 September 2024 and 16 October 2024.
 - 160 applications were received and remain under assessment.
 - Grants are scheduled to be awarded before 31 December 2024.
 - **\$0.25 million** to be included in APMAC if a current movement of funds request is successful; and
 - **\$2.31 million** for DSS Grants Hub and departmental costs to administer the package.
- Distribution of the \$25 million package was based on:
 - community sentiment reporting provided by the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) Network and suitable recommendations from Regional Directors;
 - recommendations by other Commonwealth agencies, including the DSS and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet;
 - a series of Ministerial Roundtables;
 - the greatest areas of need in the community; and
 - APMAC was informed through consultation with Palestinian, Arab and Muslim communities between 10-16 May 2024.

\$5 million Direct Support ad-hoc grant package**OFFICIAL**

Clearing Officer: Dr Emma Cassar PSM, Associate Secretary Immigration

OFFICIAL**Key Brief Number: IG-09**

- This additional funding was announced by Government on 29 August 2024 and was identified through engagement with Australian Palestinian, Muslim and Arab organisations and community leaders.
- The **\$5.08 million** will be distributed through ad-hoc grants, comprising of:
 - **\$2.60 million** for Australian Palestinian-led community organisations who have the expertise and relationships to:
 - provide community-driven approaches and flexible support packages; and
 - support the social inclusion and participation of Palestinian Australians and their family, friends and community across Australia.
 - **\$2.40 million** for community services that support youth through culturally-informed youth services and pathways to positive community participation.
- As at 30 September 2024, seven organisations had been offered grant agreements across both program streams totalling **\$4.17 million**. **All seven** of these agreements have been executed.
- Government is considering options for the remaining **\$0.83 million**.
- **\$0.08 million** is allocated for administration of the package.

Modernised Multicultural Grants Program

- On 24 July 2024, the former Minister for Immigration Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs announced 2024-25 Budget measures totalling **\$104 million** (over four years from 2024-25 and **\$0.50 million** per year ongoing from 2028-29).
- This complements the release of the Multicultural Framework review and the Government Response – *Towards Fairness – A multicultural Australia for all*.
- Included in this funding is **\$85.77 million** to flow directly to communities:
 - **\$70.00 million** for infrastructure projects
 - **\$9.77 million** for grassroots communities
 - **\$4.00 million** for support of multicultural peak bodies
 - **\$2.00 million** for faith leadership training.
- In addition, **\$14.2 million** is allocated for DSS Grants Hub and departmental costs to administer the package.
- The department is working with the DSS Grants Hub to implement multicultural grant funding opportunities.

\$25 million to support the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia:

- Funding was announced to support the restoration and refurbishment of the historical Cathedral of the Annunciation of Our Lady, upgrade of facilities at St Andrew's Theological College and assist the construction of a Great Hall, Library and Museum.
- The department is working with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia to implement this funding.

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- The Chief Finance Officer has cleared financial data contained within this brief.

Additional Information

Financial Reporting Period: up to 30 September 2024.

Recent Media

'Call to defund 'cohesion' group, The Australian, Noah Yim, 8 October 2024

Fury at funding for hate speech groups, The Australian, Sarah Ison, 17 September 2024

Labor's dud plan: pay Gaza gangs for peace, The Daily Telegraph, Andrew Bolt, 9 September 2024

ⁱ This differs to the figure reported in September 2024 because one community organisation declined the offer of funding refer to SB24-001072.

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