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Summary of Consultations regarding the 2021-22 Humanitarian Program

Humanitarian Program Consultation

Each year the Australian Government seeks the views of the Australian public on the management and composition of the Humanitarian Program (the Program). A total of 28 written submissions were received following the publication of the [Humanitarian Program 2021-22 Discussion Paper](#) between 29 April and 28 May 2021. The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Alex Hawke MP, also hosted three virtual meetings with peak refugee bodies and community organisations seeking their views on the management and composition of the 2021-22 Humanitarian Program. This document provides an overview of central issues raised regarding the composition of the Humanitarian Program during this process by the range of stakeholders who participated.

2021-22 Consultation Outcomes

Size and objectives of the Program

Stakeholders recommended that the size of the Program should be increased in line with global needs, and expressed dissatisfaction about the reduction of places from 18,750 to 13,750 in 2020-21 and 2021-22 due to the pandemic. Stakeholders also noted that implementing a 'ceiling' rather than a 'target' may result in an inflexible Program that fails to respond to emerging and escalating global conflicts and unforeseen events. In comparison, a number of stakeholders suggested that maintaining the Program at a ceiling of 13,750 places is appropriate.

Cohorts for prioritisation

Stakeholders requested that Australia ensure resettlement efforts are protection-oriented and reflect the global distribution of needs. Stakeholders commented on selectivity in relation to nationality, religion, and ethnicity.

Stakeholders affirmed their desire for Australia to prioritise UNHCR referrals to ensure that resettlement is granted to those with the greatest protection need. Collaboration with other resettlement states is encouraged to address emerging resettlement needs in acute protection scenarios, with a focus on situations rather than profiles.

Stakeholders have identified cohorts for prioritisation based on country of origin, ethnicity, religion and location. While stakeholders generally made submissions regarding the community which they represent, which are listed at Attachment A (in no particular order), a number of cohorts were identified by the majority of stakeholders as being at significant risk, including:

- **Africa** – given Africa has one of the highest projected resettlement need for 2021, stakeholders recommended that the number of places for people from African countries be increased.
- **Afghanistan** – it was recommended that the intake of people (such as Hazaras) from Afghanistan is increased to align with the withdrawal of foreign military.
- **Myanmar** – the Federal Government's decision to allow Myanmar nationals on temporary visas in Australia to extend their stay until it is safe to return home was welcomed. Some stakeholders

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recommended that permanent protection should be offered to Myanmar nationals as a long term solution.

- **Rohingya** – stakeholders suggested resettlement places should be reserved for Rohingya Muslims.
- **Uyghurs** – stakeholders indicated that Uyghurs should be prioritised under the Program, noting that Uyghurs are often in locations where they are not able to gain residency or are at risk of being returned to China.
- **Children** – stakeholders recommended that Australia maintain its commitment to resettle unaccompanied and separated refugee children by increasing their intake under the Program.
- **People of diverse genders and sexual identities** – stakeholders emphasised the resettlement needs of LGBTQI+ and recommended that dedicated places for those experiencing persecution based on their gender and sexual identity are reserved within the Program.

Special Humanitarian Program (SHP)

Stakeholders raised a number of issues regarding the SHP including processing times and support available to those arriving under the SHP compared to other entrants.

Community Support Program (CSP)

Stakeholders welcomed the recent review of the CSP and look forward to seeing changes implemented to strengthen the model¹.

Women at Risk Visa (Subclass 204)

Stakeholders urged Australia continue to prioritise the Women at Risk visa (subclass 204), and explore options for scaling it up.

In addition to the current streams, some stakeholders recommended that Australia establish a separate emergency contingency stream to enable a rapid response to appeals for urgent assistance in situations of international crises or protracted emergencies.

COVID-19 and border restrictions

The majority of stakeholders raised the disruption of resettlement travel to Australia due to COVID-19 border restrictions and noted the number of applications with the Department as a result of international travel and border restrictions. Stakeholders made a number of recommendations:

- Grant travel exemptions to refugee and humanitarian entrant visa holders.
- Allocate places for refugees and humanitarian entrants in quarantine.
- Provide remote support to refugees and humanitarian entrants awaiting resettlement.
- Explore facilitated flights from locations where there are large groups of humanitarian visa holders, such as Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Kenya, Thailand and India.

¹ On 17 December 2021 Minister Hawke's announced new measures to enhance support for refugees settlement and integration ([Enhanced support for refugee settlement and integration \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/enhanced-support-for-refugee-settlement-and-integration))

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Attachment A

Cohorts identified by stakeholders during the Consultation, based on country of origin, ethnicity, religion and location (listed in no particular order or characteristics):

Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Pakistan
Syria	Malaysia	Chaldaens	Iran
Iraq	Indonesia	Ahmadiyya Muslims	Bhutan
Lebanon	Thailand	Muslims	Kurds
Afghanistan	Yazidis	Baha'is	Yemen
Palestine	Rwanda	Rohingya	Bangladesh
Jordan	Kenya	Chin	Hong Kong
Turkey	Burundi	Uyghurs	Venezuela
South Sudan	Democratic Republic of Congo	Mandaens	Kachins
Sudan	Eritrea	Hazarans	Karens