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## 2023-24 Humanitarian Program: Community Consultations

16-17 May / 6 June 2023

Each year as part of the composition process for Australia's Humanitarian Program (Program), the Government seeks public views on Program priorities, and specific issues relating to Program composition and policy settings. This includes publishing a Program discussion paper for comment on the Department's website, and hosting a number of community consultation meetings with the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Andrew Giles MP.

This year, Minister Giles hosted three community consultations in May and June – one online meeting and two in-person meetings (Sydney and Melbourne). During these consultations, the Minister met with approximately 100 community leaders, peak refugee bodies and organisations from around Australia. Mr Adrian Edwards, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Regional Representative, also attended each meeting to provide an overview of the global humanitarian and resettlement environment.

The Department received over 40 written submissions from UNHCR, non-government organisations (NGOs), peak refugee advocacy bodies, community groups, and State and Territory Governments in response to the Humanitarian Program 2023-24 Discussion Paper.

This document provides an overview of the key issues raised regarding the composition of the Program in the consultations and written submissions.

### Context

During the consultation process, Minister Giles stated that the Government aspires to progressively increase Australia's humanitarian intake. The Minister also stated that it is the Government's priority to ensure that we deliver the Program in a way that facilitates the builds the social licence for sustainably growing the Program over future years, highlighting the UNHCR and refugee voices are critical to this process.

### Summary – 2023-24 consultation responses

#### *Humanitarian Program intake and complementary pathways*

Community representatives (representatives) welcomed the Government's commitment to gradually increase the Program intake. Representatives pushed for a stronger focus in coming years on vulnerable and high priority groups such as women, children, families and LGBTQIA+ people.

Representatives commented on the need for community sponsorship places to be counted outside the Program. There were also calls to revise English language and age criteria for the Community Sponsorship Program (CSP) to widen eligibility. A number of representatives also highlighted the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) 'journey' and how that can further link in to labour mobility pathways.

Other views centred on better collaboration with civil society, ensuring we are all having conversations to educate and raise awareness on resettlement and humanitarian issues.



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### *Cohorts for prioritisation*

Representatives supported the non-discriminatory principles of the Program, and noted that intake should be directed towards those in greatest need. Representatives highlighted the need for certain cohorts to be prioritised, including but not limited to the following:

- **Families** – suggestions for complementary pathway places via CRISP and the CSP to be made additional to the Program, and calls for these programs to also include family reunification and education pathways.
- **Women and children** – calls to increase the quota for the Woman at Risk visa stream, and the Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors program; and to shift the number of ‘pilot programs’ to permanent, ongoing sub-programs.
- **LGBTIQA+** – calls for the Government to enhance engagement with diaspora communities and the UNHCR, to understand the lived experience of LGBTIQA+ refugees and how this impacts their journey through visa and resettlement processes.
- **Afghanistan** – calls for increased attention to the ongoing Afghan situation, particularly regarding prioritisation of Hazaras, the Shia community, women and children.
- **Africa** – it was noted that responses to humanitarian crises in Africa have been slower than emergency responses such as Afghanistan and Ukraine – particularly for Sudan, South Sudan and Tigrayan communities.
- **Rohingya** – calls for increased resettlement for Rohingya.
- **Indonesia** – calls for Australia to support the caseload registered as refugees in Indonesia after 1 July 2014.
- **Uyghurs** – concerns for Uyghurs in custody in Thailand and neighbouring countries.
- **Ukraine** – representatives requested Australia create a permanent pathway for Ukrainians in Australia.

### *Shift in narrative*

Representatives raised concerns about the increasing negative domestic narrative on blaming migrants and refugees for the cost of living crisis. Representatives called on the Government to work on shifting the narrative to one that recognises the benefits, resilience and diversity that migrants and refugees contribute to the Australian community.

### *Regional resettlement (domestic)*

There was broad agreement and support for the removal of 50% regional settlement cap within the Program. Representatives stressed that refugees that have resettled in regional communities have generally settled very well. It was noted that services in regional centres and growing hubs – particularly services for women and children, need to be increased.

### *Onshore component*

Representatives renewed their calls for the onshore component of the Program to be separated from the offshore component. The Government was commended on establishing a permanent pathway for existing Temporary Protection visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise visas (SHEVs) holders via the Resolution of Status (RoS) visa.



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

<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>Horn of Africa</b>	<b>Myanmar</b>	<b>Tigray</b>
<b>Africa (East and Horn, West, Central southern)</b>	<b>Hazara</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
<b>Assyrians</b>	<b>Indonesia</b>	<b>Rohingya</b>	<b>Uyghurs</b>
<b>Armenian</b>	<b>Iran</b>	<b>Shia</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>
<b>Ahmadiyya Muslims</b>	<b>Iraq</b>	<b>Southern Cameroon</b>	<b>Yazidi</b>
<b>Baha'i</b>	<b>Jordan</b>	<b>South Sudan</b>	
<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>Kurds</b>	<b>Sudan</b>	
<b>Chaldeans</b>	<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>Syria</b>	
<b>Christian minorities</b>	<b>Malaysia</b>	<b>Tamils</b>	
<b>Eritrea</b>	<b>Mandaeen</b>	<b>Thailand</b>	
<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>Middle East</b>	<b>Tibet</b>	