



Australia's 2014-15 Humanitarian Programme

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We have the following points of views regarding Australia's 2014-15 Humanitarian Programme.

1- Iraqi asylum seekers in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey

The Chaldeans are Iraqi people and form the major part of Iraqi Christians. In the last ten years after the 2003 events the Chaldeans suffered and they are still suffering from persecution in their home country Iraq because of their Christian religion. A number of Chaldeans sought refuge in Australia and most of them reside in Sydney and Melbourne. As Australians, Iraqis, and Chaldeans we appreciate and we are very grateful to Australian government for resettling in Australia Iraqi refugees over the previous years.

The situation in Iraq is still very bad and still persecution against the Chaldeans. Many Chaldeans are targeted, threatened, tortured, and even have been killed by terrorist organisations groups and members who are in Iraq and many Chaldeans fled Iraq for their safety to seek asylum in countries like Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey. Our society (Chaldean Australian Society) serves and supports Chaldean people in Sydney and there are many concerns from our Chaldean members to the situation of their families, relatives and friends in these countries. We hope from Australian government to continue providing resettlement in Australia to Iraqi asylum seekers in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey. Please refer to UNHCR website ^[1] for more information about Iraqi asylum seekers in these countries.

2- Increasing the Proportion of Special Humanitarian Programme (SHP)

In the last two years the places granted under SHP programme were at lowest levels. In 2012-13 ^[2], 12515 offshore visas were granted with only 503 visas for SHP programme and this only 4% of offshore component. In 2011-12 ^[2], this was 10.6%.

We heard from the Hon Scott Morrison MP- Minister for Immigration and Border Protection during the Community Consultation on 21st January 2014 that the proportion of SHP in 2013-14 to be revised and to be increased. This is very good but we hope that 2014-15 programme and beyond to give significant proportion of places to SHP to reach levels like 46.5% ^[3] of offshore component in 2006-07, 40.8% ^[2] in 2008-09, 35.1% ^[2] in 2009-10, and 33.2% ^[2] in 2010-11.

The department in 2013-14 runs the community sponsorship programme known as Community Proposal Pilot ^[4] with up to 500 places within the offshore component and the refugee and humanitarian applications made under the Pilot will be considered a priority ^[5]. We hope the community proposal pilot program will not affect the chances of proposers as individuals or organisations (outside the Pilot) who also apply under SHP to sponsor their families, their relatives, or people and we think this should be done by increasing the overall number of places under SHP. In other words if the Pilot is under SHP then SHP places should be increased otherwise separating the Pilot from SHP.

3- Community Proposal Pilot

- This program to be more affordable for proposers. For example the second instalment of main applicant of \$16444 ^[6] to be reduced to about \$10,000.
- Increasing the number of Approved Proposing Organisations (APOs) instead of just five organisations ^[4]. There are organisations capable to be APOs. By doing this a number of Supporting Community Organizations (SCOs) can be APOs and this reduces the processing time and logistics issues between APO and SCO as in the current procedure. It is anticipated that the majority of humanitarian entrants coming through this program will be assisted directly by SCOs as opposed to APOs ^[5]. The SCO may exempt the sponsored people from the administration fee of \$5500 ^[5] charged by APO or use the money to sponsor others and this will make the Pilot more affordable.

4- Increasing the size (places) of the 2014-15 Programme

The 2012-13 programme had 20019 places ^[2] while the 2013-2014 programme has only 13750 places ^[7]. We hope that about 20000 visas to be granted under 2014-15 Programme and beyond.

Increasing the number of places of the programme may have the following outcomes:

- Encouraging the asylum seekers to seek legal ways and channels to reach Australia instead of illegal ways like boats
- The increase may reduce the processing time of granted Australian visas and many genuine asylum seekers will be encouraged to seek legal channels to reach Australia.

We understand this number may be a burden and may be there are capacity issues of resettlement this number of refugee in Australia but, as always, we look forward to the generosity of Australian government and people.

References:

- 1- UNHCR Website: <http://www.unhcr.org>
- 2- Australia's Offshore Humanitarian Programme: 2012-13, Department of Immigration and Citizenship
http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/immigration-update/australia_offshore_humanitarian_prog_2012-13.pdf
- 3- Australia's Offshore Humanitarian Programme: 2010-11, Department of Immigration and Citizenship
http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/immigration-update/australia_offshore_humanitarian_prog_2010-11.pdf
- 4- The Community Proposal Pilot Website:
<http://www.immi.gov.au/visas/humanitarian/offshore/community-proposal-pilot.htm>
- 5- The Approved Proposing Organisations Website: <http://cpp-apo.net>
- 6- Visa Pricing Table, 1 September 2013, Department of Immigration and Border Protection http://www.immi.gov.au/fees-charges/_pdf/visa-pricing-table.pdf
- 7- Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program 2014-15, Refugee Council of Australia, January 2014